

The Roles of Geographical Concepts in the Construction of Ancient Greek Ethno-cultural Identities, from Homer to Herodotus: An Analysis of the Continents and the Mediterranean Sea



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Cover Illustration: A modern reconstruction of Hecataeus of Miletus' world map (c. 500 BC). The continents and the Mediterranean Sea together form the basic geographical structure of the map. Source: Virga (2007) 15, plate 12.

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List of Abbreviations

General

AD	<i>anno domini</i>
<i>ap.</i>	<i>apud</i>
BC	before Christ
<i>c.</i>	<i>circa</i>
cent.	century
cf.	<i>confer</i>
col(s).	column(s)
comm.	commentary
ed.	editor(s), edited by
edn.	edition
e.g.	<i>exempli grātiā</i>
esp.	especially
et al.	<i>et alii</i>
fig.	figure
<i>fl.</i>	<i>floruit</i>
F	fragment(s)
i.e.	<i>id est</i>
n.	note
no.	number
pg.	page
r.	reign
rev.	revised, revised by
schol.	scholiast, scholia
Suppl.	supplement
s.v.	<i>sub verbo</i>
T	<i>testimonium</i>
trans.	translation, translated by
vol(s).	volume(s)

Modern Works

<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AWE</i>	<i>Ancient West and East</i>
<i>BASP</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>
<i>BMCR</i>	<i>Bryn Mawr Classical Review</i>
<i>BNJ</i>	<i>Brill's New Jacoby</i>
<i>Class. Ant.</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>FGrH</i>	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i>
<i>G&R</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>LSJ</i>	<i>Liddell, Scott and Jones, A Greek-English Lexicon</i>
<i>OCD</i>	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
<i>RLA</i>	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i>
<i>TAPhA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TrGF</i>	<i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i>

Ancient Authors and Works

<i>Aesch.</i>	<i>Aeschylus</i>
<i>Eum.</i>	<i>Eumenides</i>
<i>Pers.</i>	<i>Persians</i>
<i>PV</i>	<i>Prometheus Bound</i>
<i>Supp.</i>	<i>Suppliants</i>
<i>Aeschin.</i>	<i>Aeschines</i>
<i>In Ctes.</i>	<i>Against Ctesiphon</i>
<i>Aët.</i>	<i>Aëtius</i>
<i>Alc.</i>	<i>Alcaeus</i>
<i>Alcm.</i>	<i>Alcman</i>
<i>Anac.</i>	<i>Anacreon</i>
<i>Anth. Pal.</i>	<i>Anthologia Palatina</i>

<i>A. P.</i>	<i>Amherst Papyrus</i>
Ap. Rhod.	Apollonius Rhodius
<i>Argon.</i>	<i>Argonautica</i>
Ar.	Aristophanes
<i>Ach.</i>	<i>Acharnians</i>
<i>Av.</i>	<i>Birds</i>
<i>Eq.</i>	<i>Knights</i>
<i>Nub.</i>	<i>Clouds</i>
<i>Ran.</i>	<i>Frogs</i>
<i>Thesm.</i>	<i>Thesmophoriazusae</i>
<i>Vesp.</i>	<i>Wasps</i>
Archil.	Archilochus
Arist.	Aristotle
<i>Mete.</i>	<i>Meteorology</i>
[<i>Mund.</i>]	<i>De mundo</i>
<i>Poet.</i>	<i>Poetics</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politics</i>
Arr.	Arrian
<i>Anab.</i>	<i>Anabasis</i>
<i>Peripl. M. Eux.</i>	<i>Periplus of the Black Sea</i>
Ath.	Athenaeus
Bacchyl.	Bacchylides
Cic.	Cicero
<i>Rep.</i>	<i>De re publica</i>
Clem. Al.	Clement of Alexandria
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromateis</i>
Dem.	Demosthenes
Dio Chrys.	Dio Chrysostom
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orations</i>
Diod. Sic.	Diodorus Siculus
Diog. Laert.	Diogenes Laertius
Eur.	Euripides
<i>Alc.</i>	<i>Alcestis</i>
<i>Andr.</i>	<i>Andromache</i>

<i>Bacch.</i>	<i>Bacchae</i>
<i>Hec.</i>	<i>Hecuba</i>
<i>Hel.</i>	<i>Helen</i>
<i>Heracl.</i>	<i>Heraclidae</i>
<i>HF</i>	<i>Heracles (Hercules Furens)</i>
<i>Hipp.</i>	<i>Hippolytus</i>
<i>IA</i>	<i>Iphigenia in Aulis</i>
<i>IT</i>	<i>Iphigenia in Tauris</i>
<i>Med.</i>	<i>Medea</i>
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orestes</i>
<i>Phoen.</i>	<i>The Phoenician Women</i>
<i>Rhes.</i>	<i>Rhesus</i>
<i>Supp.</i>	<i>Suppliants</i>
<i>Tro.</i>	<i>The Trojan Women</i>
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Gell.	Aulus Gellius
NA	<i>Attic Nights</i>
Gorg.	Gorgias
Hdn.	Aelius Herodianus
Hdt.	Herodotus
Hes.	Hesiod
<i>Cat.</i>	<i>Catalogue of Women</i>
<i>Op.</i>	<i>Works and Days</i>
<i>Theog.</i>	<i>Theogony</i>
Hippoc.	Hippocrates
<i>Aer.</i>	<i>Airs, Waters, Places</i>
Hom.	Homer
<i>Il.</i>	<i>Iliad</i>
<i>Od.</i>	<i>Odyssey</i>
<i>Hymn. Hom. Ap.</i>	<i>Homeric Hymn to Delian Apollo</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae (1873 –)</i>
Isoc.	Isocrates
<i>Paneg.</i>	<i>Panegyricus</i>
Josh.	Joshua

Lycurg.	Lycurgus
<i>Leoc.</i>	<i>Against Leocrates</i>
Num.	Numbers
Paus.	Pausanias
<i>P Berol.</i>	<i>Berlin Papyri</i>
P. Haun.	The Papyrus-Collection at the Department of Greek and Latin, of the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen
Philostr.	Philostratus
<i>V S</i>	<i>Vitae sophistarum</i>
Phot.	Photius
<i>Bibl.</i>	<i>Bibliotheca</i>
Pind.	Pindar
<i>Isth.</i>	<i>Isthmian Odes</i>
<i>Nem.</i>	<i>Nemean Odes</i>
<i>Ol.</i>	<i>Olympian Odes</i>
<i>Pyth.</i>	<i>Pythian Odes</i>
Pl.	Plato
<i>Alc.</i>	<i>Alcibiades</i>
<i>Criti.</i>	<i>Critias</i>
<i>Phd.</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Resp.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
<i>Ti.</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>
Plin.	Pliny the Elder
<i>HN</i>	<i>Natural History</i>
Plut.	Plutarch
<i>Ages.</i>	<i>Agesilaus</i>
<i>Alc.</i>	<i>Alcibiades</i>
<i>Arist.</i>	<i>Aristides</i>
<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Moralia</i>
<i>Nic.</i>	<i>Nicias</i>
<i>Per.</i>	<i>Pericles</i>
<i>Phil.</i>	<i>Philopoemen</i>
<i>Pomp.</i>	<i>Pompey</i>
<i>Them.</i>	<i>Themistocles</i>

Poll.	Pollux
<i>Onom.</i>	<i>Onomasticon</i>
Polyb.	Polybius
Pompon.	Pomponius Mela
<i>POxy.</i>	<i>Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> (1898 –)
ps.-Scylax	Pseudo-Scylax
ps.-Scymn.	Pseudo-Scymnus
ps.-Xenophon	Pseudo-Xenophon
[<i>Ath. pol.</i>]	<i>The Constitution of the Athenians</i>
Ptol.	Claudius Ptolemy
<i>Geog.</i>	<i>Geography</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum</i> (1923 –)
Sen.	Seneca the Younger
<i>Q Nat.</i>	<i>Natural Questions</i>
Sext. Emp.	Sextus Empiricus
<i>Math.</i>	<i>Adversus mathematicos</i>
Simon.	Simonides
Soph.	Sophocles
<i>Aj.</i>	<i>Ajax</i>
<i>El.</i>	<i>Electra</i>
<i>OC</i>	<i>Oedipus at Colonus</i>
<i>Phil.</i>	<i>Philoctetes</i>
<i>Trach.</i>	<i>Women of Trachis</i>
Steph. Byz.	Stephanus of Byzantium
Stob.	Stobaeus
<i>Flor.</i>	Ἀνθολόγιον
Thuc.	Thucydides
Timoth.	Timotheus
<i>Pers.</i>	<i>Persians</i>
Xen.	Xenophon
<i>An.</i>	<i>Anabasis</i>
<i>Cyr.</i>	<i>Cyropaedia</i>
<i>Oec.</i>	<i>Oeconomicus</i>
<i>Por.</i>	<i>Ways and Means</i>

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Eurymedon Vase (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Attic red-figure, c. 460 BC: 1981.73).

Source:

<http://www.homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~vwohl/images/Eurymedon.jpg>

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Babylonian Map of the World (British Museum, cuneiform tablet, Sippar, Iraq: ME 92687).

Source:

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Source:

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Source:

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“Conjectural rendering of the map of Hecataeus”: the image highlights the symmetry formed by the outer ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, and by the bipartite continental configuration that has Europe in the north and Asia in the south.

Source:

Munn (2006) 215, fig. 13.

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Ephorus’ *oikoumene* and the four main *eschatiai*.

Source:

Thomson (1948) 97, fig. 10.

Abstract

The main objective of the thesis is to investigate and explain the roles that concepts of geographical space played in the construction of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities, from Homer to Herodotus. I focus specifically on two concepts – the continents and the Mediterranean Sea – as evidence from the primary sources shows that the Greeks integrated both into the process of their ethno-cultural identity construction simultaneously. This integration was highly complex because “Greekness” was an aggregation of different and competing identity planes, such as the local/*polis*, the regional, the tribal and the collective Greek. The issue of ancient Greek ethnicity and identity has produced a fertile field of classical scholarship; however, the geographical dimension has received only minor consideration. The modern philosophical and anthropological concept of alterity has dominated the study of ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. Most significant of all is the conventional association of the ancient Greeks with both geographical ethnocentrism and “Orientalism.” The theory of ancient Greek geographical ethnocentrism refers to a culturally hierarchical centre versus periphery worldview. The Greeks, inhabiting Mediterranean coastlines, believe themselves to occupy the central zone of the οἰκουμένη (“inhabited/known world”), a marker of cultural supremacy. Barbarian peoples, inhabiting distant regions and continental interiors, are consigned to the periphery, home to cultural dilapidation. Orientalism is a European colonialist discourse which stigmatises the peoples of the “Orient/East” and subordinates them to the “Occident/West.” It has been claimed that the origins of Orientalism reside in ancient Greek bigotry toward the barbarian peoples of Asia. Accordingly, in geographical terms Asia and Europe function as symbols of the antithesis between barbarian and Greek, East and West. This thesis contributes to classical scholarship by concentrating on primary source analysis as the best means to elucidate how the ancient Greeks involved geography in the conceptualisation of their ethno-cultural identities. When viewed in light of their original cultural context, the primary sources tell a somewhat different story about the continents, the Mediterranean Sea and Greek ethno-cultural self-definition than that told through the lens of alterity.

Introduction

Space is one of the most fundamental and discussed concepts of geography, yet it lacks an unambiguous definition. It is a relational concept, pertaining to a land or landscape that acquires meaning only when associated with other concepts. It is also a cultural construct; neither neutral, nor homogeneous, nor static. Cultural geography frequently furnishes space with symbolic import, highlighting its interactions with socio-cultural ideas and principles.¹ Two short extracts from the work of cultural anthropologist Mary W. Helms explain the symbolic import of geographical space:

Its attributed powers and values, its intimacy or its expanse *give* significance to actions, people, places, things; make them accessible or render them “distant,” make them mundanely commonplace or instill them with foreign exoticism.

Replete though it may seem to be with mountains and valleys, rivers and forests, islands, oceans, and continental expanses, a landscape has no meaningful shape and significance until it is accorded place and identity in the social and cognitive worlds of human experience.²

The premise of this thesis is that concepts of geographical space had an important and complex involvement in the construction of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities. “Ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities” refers to the feelings of community and belonging that arose among groups of Greeks as a result of their common ethnic ancestries, cultural characteristics, societal experiences, moral values and beliefs. These ethno-cultural identities were self-conscious statements of belonging.³ Although we live

¹ In recent decades, there has been a proliferation of research into the practice of cultural geography among the Greeks, Romans and other ancient civilisations. Cultural geography explains how humans function spatially, their interactions with spaces and places, and their perception of geographical space through the lens of culture: see Dougherty and Kurke (2003) 1. Clarke (1999) 31 states that cultural geography transforms landscapes and spaces into texts that have a figurative language revealing culture; for a selection of recent research into ancient Greek cultural geography, see Helms (1988); Romm (1992); Clarke (1999); Cole (2004); Dueck, Lindsay and Potheary (2005); Purves (2010); Raaflaub and Talbert (2010); Dueck (2012); Gilhuly and Worman (2014); Kaplan (2014); Podossinov (2014).

² Helms (1988) 9, 20.

³ See Morgan (2003) s.v. ethnicity: 558-559; McInerney (2014a) 2-3 notes that ethnicity is not a natural, fixed biological condition. All aspects of ethnic identity are malleable and some combination of these, such as language, descent and religion, will result in a group identifying itself as a community. I use the

in a modern world of nation-states, it is anachronistic to talk in terms of an ancient Greek “nation.” The Greeks lived in widely dispersed, insular and politically autonomous city-states (πόλεις), which never joined together to form a unified body politic, despite cooperating in temporary leagues and alliances. Greek unity was an ideal that had to contend with constant city-state tensions, enmity and warfare.⁴ Ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition was multi-layered, navigating a range of coexisting and competing identities. The Greeks identified with a myriad of groups within society concurrently, including one’s family, occupation, cult, class, gender, *polis*, region, tribe and wider cultural community, an identification known in modern coinage as “panhellenism.”⁵ This thesis’ original contribution to knowledge is to provide the first systematic discussion of the connotations conferred upon the continents and the Mediterranean Sea in the construction of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities. It sets out to improve our understanding of the Greeks’ sense of place in the οἰκουμένη (“inhabited/known world”). The continents and the Mediterranean Sea together dominated the perceived space and structure of the *oikoumene*.⁶ The ancient Greeks related these geographical concepts to the notion of *Hellas* (Greece) and embedded them in the process of their ethno-cultural self-definition. The continents receive a larger portion of my attention than the Mediterranean Sea, as the scholarly discussion around their ethno-cultural associations is comparatively vexed.

On the subject of ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition, most of the research undertaken in this thesis is concerned with panhellenism. As the ultimate and broadest form of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity, panhellenism’s links with geographical thought allow the greatest scope for debate. Additional consideration is given to two other important ethno-cultural groups – the Athenian Greeks and the

phrase “ethno-cultural identity,” as opposed to “ethnic” or “cultural identity,” because it better conveys the fact that the ancient Greek identities discussed in the thesis are ones that were built upon genealogical and cultural criteria in tandem.

⁴ See Hornblower (2011) 9; Malkin (2011) 13; cf. Finley (1954) 254-257, who argued that the ancient Greeks constituted a nation in that they viewed themselves to belong together as a cultural entity different from everyone else, though without having a desire to unite politically.

⁵ See Finley (1954) 260; Vlassopoulos (2007a) 91-94. Flower (2000b) usefully calls attention to the two different meanings that classicists have conferred upon the term panhellenism: “In modern usage ‘panhellenism’ has two distinct, but related, meanings. In one sense, it refers to the notion of Hellenic ethnic identity and the concomitant polarization of Greek and barbarian as generic opposites which rapidly developed as a result of the Persian invasions. In its other sense, panhellenism is the idea that the various Greek city-states could solve their political disputes and simultaneously enrich themselves by uniting in common cause and conquering all or part of the Persian empire.”

⁶ The continents known to and named by the ancient Greeks were Europe, Asia and Libya (Africa). They conceived of the Mediterranean Sea as a whole that contained within it many smaller bodies of waters, like the Adriatic, Euxine (Black Sea) and Aegean: see Ceccarelli (2012) 25-29; Kowalski (2012) 78-86.

Ionian Greeks of western Anatolia.⁷ The identities constructed by these groups were interconnected with one another and with panhellenism. The idea of shared territory was often inserted into the formulation of local and regional Greek identities.⁸ The idea of communal Greek territory was, however, rendered in only the broadest of brush strokes. With the Greeks living in over one-thousand *poleis*, scattered from Massalia (Marseille) in the western Mediterranean to Trapezus on the Euxine (Black Sea) coast, *Hellas* was a notion nebulous in its conception.⁹ It is my hypothesis that the Greeks' vast geographical diaspora resulted in some of the most expansive geographical spaces, the continents and the Mediterranean Sea, developing figurative meanings that were integrated into the process of Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. These figurative meanings have not gone unnoticed. W. H. Parker, for instance, stated that the continents became "endowed with emotional undertones" in the ancient Greek psyche.¹⁰ Similarly, Horden and Purcell argue that the ancient Greeks felt psychologically attached to the Mediterranean Sea.¹¹ This thesis engages with what has been called the "spatial turn," an emerging theme across disciplines that is interested in what it means to be situated in space.¹² The research presented builds upon and extends the small but growing scholarly dialogue concerned with the problematic issue of the relationship between geographical concepts and Greek ethno-cultural identity.¹³ Throughout ancient

⁷ The term "Ionian" had several coexistent meanings in antiquity. Most precisely, it described the inhabitants of the region of Ionia in western Anatolia, consisting of a confederation of twelve city-states – a dodekapolis. More broadly, it referred to all speakers of the Ionic dialect, including Greeks in Euboea, the Cyclades and colonies founded from Ionia. These Ionians comprised one of the four major tribes (ἔθνη) living in ancient Greece. "Ionian" could also include the Athenians, who, according to spurious early traditions, were the originators of all the Ionian peoples: see esp. Hdt. 1.146.1 – 1.147.2; Thuc. 1.12.4.

⁸ The concept of "territory" implies that a communal group's identity is fixed to some extent to a land with recognised borders that the group inhabits: see Malkin (1994) 6. Vlassopoulos (2007a) 91-94; (2007b) 166-167 defines a "region" as a geographical area that has certain common traits, patterns and forms of interaction between the various communities, territories and groups that live within it. The inhabitants of a region might share a sense of collective identity, but this is not a necessary characteristic. Examples of regional Greek identities include the Peloponnesian, Ionian, Sicilian and Pontic Greek.

⁹ On the importance of shared territory to numerous local and regional Greek identities, see McInerney (2001) 64-65; Cole (2004) 2-4, 7-8, 13; Finkelberg (2005) 18-19; Kaplan (2014) 307; McInerney (2014a) 3-4. For the argument that panhellenism lacked a well-defined territorial aspect, see Finley (1954) 255; Gould (1989) 5; Malkin (1998) 18; Braudel (2001) 228; J. M. Hall (2001) 166; Malkin (2001) 14; Saïd (2001) 275; Thomas (2001) 215; Barker (2010) 2; Malkin (2011) 206; Kaplan (2014) 307.

¹⁰ W. H. Parker (1960) 278. Lewis and Wigen (1997) 22 argue that the continents were mainly defined by their physical geography: "the Greeks tended to view the continents as physical entities, with minimal cultural or political content."

¹¹ Horden and Purcell (2000) 10-27; cf. also Matvejević (1999) 146; Harris (2005) 16; Purcell (2005) 9-29.

¹² On the "spatial turn," see Gilhuly and Worman (2014) 1.

¹³ Kaplan (2014) 298-299 notes that this issue has hitherto received minimal attention. The multiple local divisions of identity, the fragmented system of politics, and the internal tensions between Greek peoples meant that the association of ethno-cultural identity and geography was fraught with complications.

Greek history there existed many different ideas about the scope and priority of the meanings imparted upon the continents and the Mediterranean Sea. The Greeks' perceptions of the connections between these geographical concepts and ethno-cultural self-definition were highly variable because theories about what it meant to be Greek or not were extraordinarily fluid. During the sixth and fifth centuries BC, amidst dynamic social, cultural and political contexts, the Greeks inserted the continents and the Mediterranean Sea into complex discourses of identity construction. These contexts were the Lydian and Persian occupations of Ionia (second half of the sixth cent. BC); the Ionian Revolt (499 – 493 BC) and the Persian Wars (492 – 449 BC); the protracted aftermath of ongoing conflict between the Delian League and Persia; the rise of Athenian democracy and empire; the cultural flourishing of Athens; and the Peloponnesian War (431 – 404 BC). Over the course of the Classical period, one significant way in which the Greeks came to define themselves was by the ethnocentric differentiation of Greek and barbarian (βάρβαρος), a barbarian being someone who was ethnically non-Greek and culturally un-Greek. The continents and the Mediterranean Sea together not only had roles in the separation of Greek and barbarian, but also in the internal differentiation of Greek ethno-cultural sub-groups.

The aim of this thesis is to explore why and how the continents and the Mediterranean Sea featured in the conceptualisation of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities. It thereby seeks to unravel some of the earliest socio-cultural and geopolitical connotations acquired by these geographical concepts. The research accounts for approximately three centuries of Greek literature, from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (c. 750 – 700 BC) to Herodotus' *Histories* (c. 430 BC). Some primary source material from the fourth century BC is also analysed in order to give context to earlier patterns of Greek thought. Homer's epics represent a natural starting point for the discussion. They herald the dawn of Greek literature and contain the earliest documentary evidence for ancient Greek thinking about both geography and ethno-cultural identity. Herodotus' *Histories*, written during the early stages of the Peloponnesian War, bookends the discussion. This war ended Athens' decades-long military, political and cultural supremacy in Greece, and set in motion an exceptionally turbulent period of Greek internecine conflict during the fourth century BC, which reshaped the landscape of Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. The fourth century saw the political fortunes of Sparta, Thebes, Athens, and Macedonia all rise and fall in quick succession. Macedonia ascended to imperial power under Philip II (r. 359 – 336 BC) and his son Alexander III,

the Great (r. 336 – 323 BC). The Macedonians conquered mainland Greece at the southern end of the Balkan Peninsula, the Aegean region (359 – 338 BC) and Persia (334 – 325 BC), before Alexander's death in 323 BC split apart the empire and ushered in the Hellenistic Age (323 – 31 BC). Macedonian political domination generated divergent responses among the Greeks. There was heated debate about the status of Macedonian ethnicity and culture. The pages of Isocrates, Demosthenes, Aeschines, Theopompus and others abound with polemic about the ambiguous relationship between the Macedonian and Greek cultures. Some Greek intellectuals thought of the Macedonians as cultural antipodes to and enemies of the Greeks. Others thought of them as cultural allies who could help bring to fruition the rhetoric of panhellenic crusade against Persia, which reached its apogee in the middle of the century. The disagreement about the Macedonians' position on the Greek-barbarian spectrum, while not entirely new, was now in the vanguard of Greek ethno-cultural identity construction, signalling an appreciable shift in focus. Throughout the fifth century BC, the Greeks' primary cultural antonym had been the Persians.¹⁴ The subsequent shift in focus away from Persian-centric narratives of Greek ethno-cultural identity in the fourth century BC has been left largely uncharted, so as not to overextend the thesis and risk diminishing its thematic integrity.

The primary sources examined in this work are numerous and diverse. Most are literary and all hold some relevance to the continents, the Mediterranean Sea, or the construction of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities. Unfortunately, no ancient Greek world maps survive intact besides Renaissance copies of the ones believed to have been drawn by Claudius Ptolemy in the second century AD.¹⁵ It is, therefore, impossible to see for ourselves how the Greeks graphically depicted the continents and the Mediterranean Sea as component parts of the *oikoumene*. We must rely instead on extant literary descriptions, which creatively interpret the space presumed to be portrayed.¹⁶ It was not until the mid-third century BC that a scientific discipline of geography and a distinct category of geographical literature were first created by Eratosthenes of Cyrene (c. 285 – 205 BC). Geography, nevertheless, mattered in Archaic and Classical Greece. The evidence suggests that merchants, navigators,

¹⁴ For general discussion of the main characteristics of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction in the fourth century BC and through into the Hellenistic Age, see esp. Momigliano (1975); Hirsch (1985); Dihle (1994); Flower (2000a); Burstein (2003); Isaac (2004); Gruen (2006); (2011b).

¹⁵ Aujac (1987a) 130; Dilke (1987) 105-106.

¹⁶ See Brotton (2012) 7, 14; Dzino (2014) 45-47.

generals and many members of the intelligentsia had a better grasp of geography than the average Greek citizen, whose comprehension was normally quite limited.¹⁷ Geographic knowledge was disseminated throughout various genres of literature, including poetry, historiography, philosophy and travelogues. The source tradition for this study comprises a mixture of fully extant and fragmentary material.¹⁸ There are many ancient sources cited, including Homer's epics, snippets of Anaximander's and Hecataeus' geographical thinking, Simonides' lyric poetry, Aeschylus' tragedies, Herodotus' *Histories*, and the Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places*. The subsequent analyses of these sources intend to keep in mind the differences in their overarching themes, as well as the various socio-cultural and political milieux in which they were produced. A disproportionate amount of our information on ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity derives from extant fifth-century Athenian sources. Acknowledging and accounting for this fact will help to avoid the all too common mistake of seeing Athenian worldviews as homogeneous and representative of all Greeks.

In the last few decades, ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction has become a popular topic of study in Classics.¹⁹ Novel observations and interpretations are regularly emerging, but there remain many gaps in our knowledge. Importantly, the geographical content of "Greekness," that is, the use of geography to help shape Greek ethno-cultural identity, has largely been relegated to a side issue. The modern philosophical and anthropological concept of the "Other" frames many academic forays into the study of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities. The concept is widely used in the social sciences to explain the processes by which groups of people compartmentalise other peoples whom they adjudge not to fit into their society. The Other is the antithesis that defines the "Self."²⁰ Classicists have frequently attempted to understand Greek-barbarian polarity as a prototypical and routine Self versus Other dichotomy. As a corollary, they have compacted the continents' involvement in

¹⁷ On the depth of geographic knowledge among the different classes of ancient Greek society, see Dilke (1985); Aujac (1987a) 138-139; Dueck (2012) 1-11; Dan, Geus and Guckelsberger (2014) 20. For my own research into ancient geography, cartography and exploration, see McPhail and Hannah (2008-11); (2011-12); McPhail (2014).

¹⁸ The difficulties of working with fragmentary source material, by which we usually mean excerpts of a work recorded by later writers, are well-documented: see esp. Flower (1994) 1-10. It is important to employ a critical, analytical approach to fragments because often we cannot be sure of the original contexts, or even if the original words have been accurately reproduced.

¹⁹ For a cross section of the most recent and influential work in the field, see Hartog (1988); E. Hall (1989); Cartledge (1993); Georges (1994); Coleman (1997); J. M. Hall (1997); Malkin (2001); J. M. Hall (2002); Harrison (2002); Isaac (2004); Malkin (2005); Mitchell (2007); Kim (2009); Gruen (2011b); Skinner (2012); Almagor and Skinner (2013); McInerney (2014a).

panhellenism into an interpretative framework based on a modern Eurocentric discourse of Self versus Other. Renowned scholar and cultural critic, the late Edward Said, called this framework “Orientalism,” which serves as the title for his most famous book, published in 1978. Orientalism denotes the preconception of a cultural divide between Orient (Middle Eastern and Asiatic society) and Occident (western European society)/East and West. Since at least the eighteenth century, many Western colonialists and imperialists have articulated a viewpoint that stereotypes and denigrates the peoples of Asia and the Middle East with whom they have collided.²¹ The rise of radical Islamic terrorism in the twenty-first century has been absorbed into the Orientalist agenda, as highlighted by N. Ettliger and F. Bosco in their article “Thinking Through Networks and Their Spatiality: A Critique of the US (Public) War on Terrorism and its Geographic Discourse”:

Territory itself has become symbolic: Afghanistan, which is not in the Middle East, is nonetheless often relegated “there”, to the Middle East, which is perceived as the incubator of the terrorist-related problems.²²

Said and others after him have traced the origins of Orientalism back to ancient Greece, the alleged progenitor of Western civilisation. They posit that the Greeks perceived the continents Asia and Europe as allegories for barbarian and Greek, East and West. A passage from Anthony Pagden’s *Worlds at War: The 2,500-Year Struggle Between East and West* (2008) epitomises this point of view:

Some of the old fault lines that have divided peoples over the centuries are, however, still very much with us. One of these is the division — and the antagonism — between what was originally thought of as Europe and Asia and then, as these words began to lose their geographical significance, between “East” and “West”. The division, often illusory, always metaphorical, yet still immensely powerful, is an ancient one.... The awareness that East and West were not only different regions of the world but also regions filled with different peoples, with different cultures,

²⁰ Cartledge (1993) 2.

²¹ Said (1978) 1-3, 21, 54-58, 68, 204-205.

²² Ettliger and Bosco (2004) 263.

worshipping different gods and, most crucially, holding different views on how best to live their lives, we owe not to an Asian but to a Western people: the Greeks.²³

The research presented in this thesis suggests that such an interpretation oversimplifies and distorts the nuanced socio-cultural meanings that the Greeks conferred upon the continents. Asia/Europe, barbarian/Greek, and East/West are not synonymous binaries without temporal or situational limitations. In some ancient sources there is overlap between these binaries; in others, there is slight or considerable disjunction. The theory of ancient Greek Orientalism uses preconceived ideas to interpret the primary sources. Although it is impossible to think about the past in total isolation from one's own culture and biases, this thesis makes a concerted effort to understand the specific cultural fabric that steered ancient Greek views of the continents. In exploring the cultural history of the continents, I take cue in particular from the book *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*, published in 1997. The authors, M. Lewis and K. E. Wigen, assert that there has not been enough investigation into the ideological factors influencing the representation of geographical space; the spatial contours of East and West; or the physical and socio-cultural architecture of the continents from antiquity through to modern times.²⁴

The concept of the Other has also piloted classical scholarship's interpretation of what the Mediterranean Sea meant to the ancient Greeks. Conventional wisdom postulates that geographical ethnocentrism was a predominant mode of thought in ancient Greek ethnography. Accordingly, the Greeks, living all around the Mediterranean shoreline, occupied the central zone of the *oikoumene*. The centre was a space associated with normalcy and cultural sophistication. Barbarian Others were relegated to the periphery of the *oikoumene*. The periphery was a space that became

²³ Pagden (2008) x-xvii; see also Hay (1957) 2-3; W. H. Parker (1960) 278; Said (1978) 54-57; E. Hall (1989) 99; de Romilly (1992) 2-4; Coleman (1997) 188; Mikkeli (1998) 7; Kaplan (1999) 11-13, 20-22, 34; Hartog (2001) 81-82; Guerrina (2002) 2-3; Pagden (2002) 35-36; Alonso-Núñez (2003) 147; Brosius (2006) 76; Munn (2006) 181, 225, 233; Mitchell (2007) 58-62; Price and Thonemann (2010) 116-117; Meier (2012) 26-28, 37; Kim (2013) 30. For some recognition of the subtleties and complexities of ancient Greek approaches to the continents' symbolic meanings, see Dihle (1994) 33; Ziolkowski (1994) 1-35; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 21-49; Thomas (2000) 75-115.

²⁴ Lewis and Wigen (1997) 21, 47-48. Rollinger (2014) 131 notes that a great deal of scholarly consideration has been given to the concept of Europe; the concepts of Asia and the ancient Near East have, in contrast, been marginalised.

progressively more alien and degenerate the farther one moved out from the centre.²⁵ The centre versus periphery binary is another way in which the ancient Greeks are believed to have defined their collective identity geographically. This opinion reflects a widespread tendency in the secondary literature to pigeonhole and systematise ancient Greek views of the world. An evidence based approach, however, casts some doubt on the validity of the theory of ancient Greek geographical ethnocentrism. The culturally hierarchical order and organisation of the *oikoumene* that it entails is out of step with the messy and organic cultural geography spread throughout much of the primary source material. Our understanding of the Mediterranean Sea's involvement in ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition has not been significantly impacted by the modern historiography of the Mediterranean. Historians of the Mediterranean have argued for the existence of an interconnected Mediterranean world and history. Despite their overall synthesising focus, they have acknowledged that the ways in which the ancient Greeks experienced and understood the Mediterranean were specific to that culture.²⁶

The thesis begins with a review of the primary and secondary source material on the subject of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. The scholarship's treatment of the subject is critically appraised, with three main issues addressed: the circumstances and origin of panhellenism; the defining features of Greek and barbarian as categories of identification; and the application of modern theoretical paradigms to the study of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities. By addressing these issues, the chapter sets the scene for the body of the thesis, which dissects why and how the continents and the Mediterranean Sea featured in the conceptualisation of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities.

Chapter two outlines the fundamental structure and characteristics of the ancient Greek *oikoumene*. The primary focus therein is to explain where in the inhabited/known world the Greeks thought themselves to be situated and the socio-cultural significance

²⁵ On the ancient Greek theory of geographical ethnocentrism, see Hartog (1988) 349; Gould (1989) 94-98; Romm (1992) 46-47, 54-55; Bichler (2001) 45-48; Karttunen (2002) 457; Cole (2004) 75-76; Varisco (2007) 65; Gunter (2009) 57-58; Cole (2010) 199, 207; McInerney (2011) 96-101; Brotton (2012) 8-9, 24, 35; Dueck (2012) 188; Irby (2012) 83; Skinner (2012) 72. For scepticism of the veracity of this theory, see Malkin (2001) 14; J. M. Hall (2002) 121; Vlassopoulos (2007a) 91-94; (2007b) 10; Meier (2012) 24-25; Purcell (2012) 377.

²⁶ For modern historiography of the Mediterranean, see Braudel (1949); Grant (1969); Matvejević (1999); Horden and Purcell (2000); Braudel (2001); Harris (2005); Purcell (2005); Abulafia (2011); Malkin (2011).

of that self-positioning. There are two important issues to consider. The first is how the Greeks used the Mediterranean Sea and its connections with the concept of *Hellas* to create a space in the *oikoumene* for themselves relative to the rest of humankind. The second is to what extent the Greeks' self-positioning accorded with a culturally hierarchical centre versus periphery binary. A large amount of ancient Greek thinking about non-Greek peoples can be defined as ethnocentric, which means judging other cultures solely by the standards of one's own culture. It is not necessarily a consequence, as the weight of the primary evidence shows, that geographical ethnocentrism dictated the involvement of geographical concepts in Greek ethno-cultural self-definition.²⁷

Chapter three details the genesis of the ancient Greek continental system. It assesses the continents' earliest functions in Greek physical and cultural geography, focussing especially on their associations with the concept of *Hellas* and Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. Anaximander (c. 611 – 546 BC) and Hecataeus (c. 550 – 476 BC), who both lived in the Ionian city of Miletus in the sixth century BC, invented the continents, depicting them as important component parts of world physical geography that had ancillary geopolitical and socio-cultural connotations. The continents' intersection with ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition appears to have been of a quite unexpected nature, incompatible with the idea that Europe was to Asia as Greek was to barbarian. The original division of Europe and Asia had a symbolic meaning relating to the geopolitical situation of the Ionian communities in Anatolia, as Greek inhabitants of the western frontier of Asia, who lived under the dominion of first the Mermnad Lydian Empire (c. 716 – 546 BC) and later the Achaemenid Persian Empire (c. 550 – 330 BC).

Chapter four investigates the evolution in ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition that occurred in Athens during the Persian Wars, and the effects that this evolution had on the continents' symbolic associations with Greekness. In terms of primary source material, the chapter provides a case study of Aeschylus' *Persians* (472 BC), which evaluates how the continents are represented in the play. There are also

²⁷ "Ethnocentrism" was coined in 1906 by American academic William G. Sumner: see E. Hall (1989) 48. Ethnocentrism can operate on various levels from the overt to the subtle. Geographical ethnocentrism is a special type of ethnocentrism whereby one area of the world is perceived as being better than others. Proponents of this outlook usually equate this area with the location of their own civilisation and believe it to occupy the centre of the world. All other peoples inhabit the peripheries. It is implied that those living in the centre are normal and often culturally sophisticated in contrast to those degenerates living in

comparisons and contrasts with other works of Athenian poetry and drama. Tragedy and triumph in the Persian Wars; the rise of Athenian democracy and empire; and later the destabilising impact of the Peloponnesian War all roused strong emotions in Athens about what it meant to be Greek. These emotions were conspicuously on display at the civic theatre, an important Athenian meeting place, social institution and political arena. Athens' poets animated the convergent discourses of Athenian identity, Ionian identity and panhellenism, in which the continents diversely featured. The continental divides became mechanisms of Athenian cultural ideology, suffused with symbolic import by the history of Persian imperialist invasions and retreats across the boundary lines.

The fifth and final chapter is a case study of Herodotus' *Histories*. It provides a wide-ranging discussion of the ways in which Herodotus understands geography to inform ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. Throughout his historical account, Herodotus creates a complex nexus between the continents, the concept of *Hellas*, and the wider *oikoumene*. This nexus can be juxtaposed with approaches to the relationship between geography and ethno-cultural identity found in other fifth-century Greek prose works. The *Histories* receives a comprehensive treatment because many issues of geography and culture are seminal to its narrative of conflict between the Greeks and Persians. Herodotus' perspective on Greek ethno-cultural self-definition is multifaceted, as he simultaneously constructs and deconstructs the concepts of Greek and barbarian. Drawing upon a lifetime of travel and observation, he navigates his way through many different modes of thinking about Greek ethno-cultural identities and their geographical aspects.

the peripheries. For analysis of the fundamental principles of geographical ethnocentrism, see esp. Helms (1988) 4, 22; Bilde (1993) 9.

A Review of the Primary and Secondary Source Material on Ancient Greek Ethno-cultural Identity Construction

The corpus of specialist literature on ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction is growing rapidly. The ethnogenesis of the Greeks, the process by which they came to consider themselves as ethnically and culturally similar to one another and different from non-Greeks, has generated significant debate. Classicists dispute when, why and how the Greeks first formulated a sense of collective identity. There are those who argue that panhellenism emerged in the early Archaic period, and was initially aggregative in nature. Aggregative infers that Greek communities constructed a shared Greek identity internally and cumulatively on the basis of perceived sameness among peer groups. Proponents of this hypothesis commonly assert that the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity first properly materialised at the time of the Persian Wars. The conflict accordingly incited a pronounced change in the emphasis of ethno-cultural self-definition, directing the Greeks' attention away from what bound them together as a people and toward what separated them as a people from barbarians. Recently, another school of thought about the timeline of the Greek ethnogenesis has gained momentum, positing that the conceptual division of Greeks and barbarians predated the Persian invasion of Greece and operated side-by-side with aggregative self-definition. It is also disputed how the ancient Greeks defined Greek and barbarian as categories of identification. Ethnic kinship was important, but even greater priority was given to socio-cultural criteria, such as language, religion and political structure. Perceived differences between the enlightened, advanced culture of the Greeks and the barbarism of non-Greeks are diffused throughout the source tradition of Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. It is standard practice to consider the delineation of Greek and barbarian in association with the modern theoretical paradigm of Self versus Other. One of the most notable outgrowths of this association has been the theory of ancient Greek Orientalism. The theory casts the Greeks as forebears of modern Western colonialist and imperialist prejudices, the creators of an enduring dogma that homogenises and demonises the inhabitants of Asia (the East) as the antipodes of Greek civilisation (the West).¹ In the last two decades especially, the assumed continuity between ancient

¹ See Said (1978) 1-3, 21, 54-58. Before Said, Drews (1973) 2 argued that the "Eastern world" occupied most of the geographical and temporal space of the Greeks' known world. He implied that the Greeks

Greek views of non-Greeks and Orientalism has received criticism from the few scholars starting to revise the traditional narrative of rigid Greek-barbarian polarity. The revised narrative exposes the complications and ambiguities in Greek ethnographic thought. It suggests that there is a modern tendency to overemphasise the role of Greek-barbarian polarity in the ancient Greek cultural consciousness, and also challenges the validity of identifying the ancient Greeks with Orientalism.² The following sections of this chapter review the main issues arising from the primary and secondary source material on ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities. Overall, the evidence discussed supports the finding that the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity has been susceptible to modern exaggeration and perversion, which has significant ramifications for my investigation into the geographical content of Greekness.

The Ancient Greek Ethnogenesis: Circumstances and Origin

Jonathan M. Hall analyses the origin of collective Greek identity in two monographs, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (1997) and *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (2002).³ Hall argues that panhellenism developed relatively late in the history of ancient Greece. There are signs that it was nascent in the Archaic period, but it only became properly consolidated during the fifth century BC. Throughout the Archaic period, Greeks (calling themselves *Hellenes*) invoked common ethnic descent from the eponymous ancestor Hellen. This mythic panhellenic genealogy is articulated, for instance, in the fragmentary Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (c. 7th cent. BC). The memory of widespread Greek participation in the legendary Trojan War (c. 1250 BC), immortalised by the *Iliad*, cultivated a legacy of Greek unity forged opportunely in the context of military action.⁴ Festivals, such as the Olympic Games (founded in 776 BC) and the Eleusinian Mysteries, were panhellenic in reach, and so too were some cultic organisations like the Delphic amphictyony that supported the temples of Apollo and Demeter through cooperation between the twelve founding city-states. The Oracle at Delphi became a symbol of association among the Greeks. It played a vital role in

conceived of Asiatics as forming a cultural mass that was at least outwardly homogeneous; see also Pohlenz (1937) 5, 20, 30; Immerwahr (1966) 17-22.

² For discussion of this new direction in the scholarship, see esp. Papadodima (2014) 257-258.

³ The forthcoming summary of Hall's work simplifies his complex discussion of the origin of collective Greek identity: see esp. J. M. Hall (1997) 2, 44-47; (2002) 5-8, 27-29, 121-124, 175; (2003) 27-30.

⁴ Cf. Eur. *IA*, 1265; *Or.* 574, 1134, 1365: these passages from Euripidean tragedies depict the Trojan War as fought by and on behalf of all Greeks.

authorising overseas colonisation ventures, which fostered links between Greeks living in a mother city (μητρόπολις) and Greeks living in its colonies (ἀποικίαι).⁵ The concept of panhellenism competed with a myriad of regional and *polis* identities, many of which originated in Mycenaean Greece (c. 1600 – 1100 BC). These narrower definitions of community are an important feature of the *Iliad*'s "Catalogue of Ships" (Hom. *Il.* 2.494-759). *Hellas* did not exist as a political territory like the modern nation-state; it was instead a cultural construct, referring to a fluid, imagined space comprised of far-flung, independent city-state settlements. On one level, groups of Greeks recognised subtle differences between each other. The specific genealogies and dialects of the four major Greek ἔθνη (tribes/ethnic groups) – Dorians, Ionians, Aeolians and Achaeans – communicated these differences. On another level though, the populations of Archaic Greece comprehended an overarching commonality in their ethnic heritage and cultural traits. According to Hall, Greek ethno-cultural identity construction prior to the Persian Wars focussed on the similarities among the Greeks, rather than on their divergences from non-Greeks. He is a notable proponent of the argument that the conceptualisation of Greekness pre-Persian Wars was aggregative and that from then on it became oppositional, dialled in on the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity. The fight against the Persian threat engendered both conceit and fear of foreigners among the Greeks. These emotive reactions amplified Greek xenophobic attitudes, which now became the basis of Greek thinking about themselves as an ethno-cultural community.⁶

The edifice of panhellenism pre-Persian Wars is disputed. Irad Malkin, in several essays and books, including his recent monograph *A Small Greek World: Networks in the Ancient Mediterranean* (2011) provides an alternative viewpoint to that of Hall. The general framework of interpretation is ostensibly similar, positioning the Persian Wars as a watershed that invigorated panhellenism and gave emphasis to the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity. Unlike Hall, however, Malkin traces a diluted form of the polarity back to well before the Persian Wars, its roots found in the circumstances of Greek colonisation ventures in the eighth and seventh centuries BC. Greek migrants in the regions of Asia Minor, Italy, Sicily, North Africa and Celtica (France) were

⁵ On the importance of Delphi in the emergence of panhellenism, see esp. Dougherty and Kurke (2003) 10; McInerney (2011) 97-101; Eckerman (2014) 22. Cf. the Hellenion, a common Greek sanctuary at Naucratis in Egypt, found in c. 570 BC by nine Greek city-states of Asia Minor: see Kim (2013) 34.

⁶ J. M. Hall (1997) 44-47; (2002) 175; cf. Hornblower (2011) 13: "Persia gave the Greeks their identity or the means for recognizing it." Other important works that perceive the same absolute disjuncture between Greek ethno-cultural self-definition before and after the Persian Wars include Jüthner (1923) 1-13; E. Hall (1989) 1-5; Cartledge (1993) 13, 38-39; de Romilly (1993) 283-292; Hartog (2001) 80-84.

bonded by the experiences that they shared as colonists abroad. Colonial experiences and knowledge filtered across a connective system of trade and exchange, which linked colonies to one another and to their mother cities. Participation in panhellenic institutions, the dissemination of the Greek alphabet, and the oral tradition of the Homeric epics evoked feelings of sameness throughout the network of Greek *poleis*. These feelings were in turn heightened by differences that Greek colonists perceived between themselves and the non-Greek inhabitants of neighbouring areas. A consistent depiction of non-Greek peoples as constituting a quintessentially un-Greek barbarian genus is lacking in Archaic period sources. There are instead a mixture of negative and positive reactions to numerous, distinct foreign cultures.⁷ Another recent work of note that moves in the same direction as Malkin is Joseph Skinner's *The Invention of Greek Ethnography: From Homer to Herodotus* (2012). The main aim of this book is to challenge the popular opinion that the science of Greek ethnography arose in direct response to the Persian Wars. Skinner judges that Greek ethnography existed in the Archaic period and that it engaged a variety of non-Greek peoples in the process of Greek ethno-cultural identity construction.⁸

The primary source material supports the view that some measure of differentiation between Greeks and barbarians predated the Persian Wars. There is a school of thought that associates the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity specifically with the Ionian Greeks of western Anatolia. The Ionians, living under Lydian and later Persian hegemony, reacted to their non-Greek neighbours in diverse ways. Representations of non-Greek difference become a trope of Ionian literature in the late sixth century BC especially.⁹ The philosopher Xenophanes of Colophon (c. 570 – 475 BC), for example, casts the arrival of Persian invaders in Ionia (546/545 BC), marshalled by the Median commander Harpagus, as a dire new age for Greeks in the region (Xenophanes, F 4, *ap.* Ath. 2.54e = Graham):

παρ πυρὶ χρὴ τοιαῦτα λέγειν χειμῶνος ἐν ὥρῃ

⁷ See Malkin (2001) 7-8; (2005) 59; (2011) 3-8, 93, 218; see also Vlassopoulos (2007a) 91-94; Collar (2014) 105; Kaplan (2014) 305-307.

⁸ Skinner (2012) 3-4, 17-21; for similar assertions, see Coleman (1997) 178-188; Tuplin (1999) 55; Munson (2005) 1-2; Ross (2005) 301, 315; cf. the short article by Weiler (1968) 21-29, which alleged that the Archaic Greek worldview sharply differentiated a Greek world from a non-Greek world. In Weiler's estimation, Greek literature of the period is full of uncomplimentary representations of foreign language, dress and customs.

⁹ See Malkin (2001) 7-8; (2005) 58-61; Mitchell (2007) 48-63, 123-126; Kim (2009) 20-22; Skinner (2012) 3; Kim (2013) 25.

ἐν κλίνῃ μαλακῇ κατακείμενον, ἔμπλεον ὄντα,
πίνοντα γλυκὺν οἶνον, ὑποτρώγοντ' ἐρεβίνθους·
“τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν, πόσα τοι ἔτη ἐστί, φέριστε;
πηλίκος ἦσθ' ὅθ' ὁ Μῆδος ἀφίκετο;”

Beside a fire in the winter season it is necessary to say such things as these,
lying down on a soft couch, with stomach full,
drinking sweet wine, and munching on chick-peas:
“Who, from where in the world, and how many years of age are you?
How old were you when the Mede arrived?”¹⁰

The final question that Xenophanes recommends asking a new dinner guest shows that he deems the Persian invasion to have been a defining event in the lives of the Ionian Greeks. The fear of Persian oppression triggered mass emigrations from Ionia in which he himself is thought to have participated. Additionally, Xenophanes claims that the earlier Lydian regime in Ionia had corrupted the way of life in his native Colophon, breeding decadence and effeminacy among the populace (Xenophanes, F 6, *ap. Ath.* 12.526a-b = Graham):

ἀβροσύνας δὲ μαθόντες ἀνωφελέας παρὰ Λυδῶν
ὄφρα τυραννίης ἦσαν ἄνευ στυγερῆς,
ἦσαν εἰς ἀγορὴν παναλουργέα φάρε' ἔχοντες,
οὐ μείους ὥσπερ χίλιοι εἰς ἐπίπαν,
αὐχαλέοι, χαίτησιν ἀγάλμενοι εὐπρεπέεσσιν
ἀσκητοῖς ὁδμὴν κρίμασι δευόμενοι.

Learning useless luxuries from the Lydians,
while they were still without abominable tyranny,
they would gather in the marketplace wearing purple cloaks,
not less than one thousand in all,
boastfully delighting in shining long hair,
covered in the scent of prepared oils.

¹⁰ See Momigliano (1975) 123 for the historical significance of the passage's final line. All the translations of ancient Greek and Latin text in this thesis are my own unless otherwise indicated.

Before the Persian Wars, the Greek sources on a few rare occasions employ the word βάρβαρος as either a noun or an adjective to refer to non-Greeks. The initial origin of βάρβαρος was not starkly pejorative. Possibly a Sumero-Babylonian loan word, the initial referent appears to have been anyone whose speech sounded incomprehensible to the Greek ear.¹¹ It onomatopoeically mimicked the unintelligible noises of foreign language, or in the case of Homer's βαρβαρόφωνοι Carians, bastardised forms of Greek (Hom. *Il.* 2.867; Strabo 14.2.28).¹² The Greek language was one of the distinctive markers of Greekness. Moreover, as the Ionian lyric poet Anacreon of Teos (c. 582 – 485 BC) signals, departure from the Greek language came to denote foreignness: κοίμισον δὲ, Ζεῦ, σόλοικον φθόγγον, μή πως βάρβαρα βάζῃς (“And take care, Zeus, of solecian speech, unless you talk somehow in a barbarian manner” – Anac. F 423, *ap. Hdn. On Non-Greek Words and Solecisms* = Campbell). The Ionians, in daily contact with the non-Greek peoples of Asia Minor, were surrounded by barbarian chatter. It should be expected then that some Ionian sources from the late sixth century BC supply the first overtly derogatory uses of the word βάρβαρος.¹³ Pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 535 – 475 BC) says that κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἀνθρώποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὠτα βαρβάρους ψυχὰς ἔχόντων (“Wretched witnesses for men are the eyes and ears of those who have barbarian souls” – Heraclitus, F 22, *ap. Sext. Emp. Math.* 7.126; Stob. *Flor.* 3.4.54 = Graham). What this statement means is that men with “barbarian souls” are those who perceive without truly comprehending the world around them, just as barbarians hear Greek words without properly grasping their meanings. The inability to speak and understand Greek thereby taints non-Greeks with a lack of the same reason, knowledge and wisdom to which the Greeks themselves lay claim.¹⁴ The single appearance of βάρβαρος in the fragments of Hecataeus of Miletus’ geographical treatise Περίοδος Γῆς (*Periodos Ges*) is culturally neutral by comparison. It entails a straightforward differentiation between the

¹¹ Cf. Kim (2013) 34-35, who argues against the Sumero-Babylonian origin, suggesting that the old Persian *barabara* (“he who carries a burden” – taxpayer) is a more plausible derivation. This derivation would help explain why βάρβαρος often designates peoples in Asia who pay tax to the Persian throne.

¹² The array of scholarship on the early meanings and contexts of βάρβαρος is substantial. For a selection of works that agree upon an initial connotation that was dispassionate compared to those which later emerged, see Weidner (1913) 303-304; Jüthner (1923) 1-13; Bacon (1961) 10-11: n. 8; Diller (1961) 39-40; Toynbee (1969) 58; Long (1986) 130-136; J. M. Hall (2002) 111-117; Gruen (2006) 295-297; Kim (2009) 11-12; Wrenhaven (2012) 23; Kim (2013) 34-35.

¹³ See E. Hall (1989) 10.

¹⁴ See Zacharia (2008) 25-27.

Peloponnese's indigenous non-Greek inhabitants and the Greeks who colonised it: Ἑκαταῖος μὲν οὖν ὁ Μιλήσιος περὶ τῆς Πελοποννήσου φησὶν διότι πρὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὤκησαν αὐτὴν βάρβαροι ("So Hecataeus of Miletus says about the Peloponnese that before the time of the Greeks, barbarians inhabited it" – Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 119, *ap.* Strabo 7.7.1).

J. E. Coleman, in his essay "Ancient Greek Ethnocentrism" (1997), has attempted to date the origin of Greek-barbarian polarity back beyond sixth-century Ionia to Homer's epics, which were most likely composed during the eighth century BC.¹⁵ He argues that the earliest articulations of collective Greek identity evolved from the perception that the *Iliad*'s tale of a unified Greek expedition against Troy reflected a historical reality of the late Bronze Age. The "Epic Cycle," which contains the extant *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, broadcast the story of the Trojan War throughout the Greek-speaking world. The two Homeric epics, in Coleman's opinion, are Hellenocentric, delineating Greekness by means of contrast between renowned, illustrious Greek heroes and their foreign enemies.¹⁶ As well as Hellenocentrism, Edward Said detected Orientalism in both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. According to Said, Homer's Greeks are superior in arms and cultural character to the Trojans, Carians, Phoenicians and other peoples of the Near East (western Asia and Egypt) whom they encounter. These ethnic groups share common degenerate qualities typecast as Oriental:

For certain associations with the East – not quite ignorant, not quite informed – always seem to have gathered around the notion of an Orient. Consider first the demarcation between Orient and West. It already seems bold by the time of the *Iliad*.¹⁷

Irene J. Winter is a supporter of this interpretation. Her paper, "Homer's Phoenicians: History, Ethnography or Literary Trope? A Perspective on Early Orientalism" (1995), postulates that the Phoenicians in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are broadly categorised as

¹⁵ The extent to which the material in the epics reflects the realities of late Bronze Age Mycenaean society or Homer's own contemporary context is debated. The most common and profitable approach is to conclude that Homer blends historical and contemporary elements in an attempt to create a believable and relevant picture of the Mycenaean world: see Toynbee (1969) 4; Kirk (1985) 238; Dougherty (2001) 111; Mark (2005) 10-11; Gunter (2009) 53.

¹⁶ Coleman (1997) 177, 186-187; note that Coleman qualifies Homer's ethnocentrism by declaring that it is less extremely prejudiced and pejorative than many later Greek examples, especially those from the fifth and fourth centuries BC.

¹⁷ Said (1978) 56.

Oriental. They exhibit a miscellany of traits that taken together look to be representative of a distinctly Asiatic barbarism. Homer accentuated these traits to paint a negative picture of the Phoenicians and all Orientals as antagonists of the Greeks.¹⁸

The approach to Homer prescribed by Coleman, Said and Winter is unconvincing. The majority view sees little proof in the epics of a strictly defined Greek-barbarian, East-West antithesis.¹⁹ The concept of panhellenism was itself only in earliest infancy. In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, no single ethnonym is used to describe the combined forces marshalled against Troy. Homer employs three names, interchangeable depending on the required metrical footprint: Ἀχαιοί (Achaeans), Δαναοί (Danaans), and Ἀργεῖοι (Argives). Ἀχαιοί is the most common, but its usage is overshadowed by the repetition of various narrower designations of ethno-cultural identity connected with particular settlements and populations (Hom. *Il.* 2.494-759). The term Ἕλληνες (*Hellenes*) seems to have initially referred to a tribe settled in southern Thessaly (Hom. *Il.* 2.681-685).²⁰ Ἑλλάς (*Hellas*), which would later come to designate any and all lands inhabited by Greeks, likewise denoted the region in southern Thessaly inhabited by *Hellenes* (Hom. *Il.* 2.683-684, 9.395; *Od.* 11.496). It simultaneously applied more widely to the central and northern part of the Greek mainland surrounded by Illyria, Macedonia, Thrace and the Peloponnese (Hom. *Od.* 1.344, 4.726, 4.816, 15.80). Markers of local and regional identity, such as Ἕλληνες, have an important role in the epics. The Homeric heroes predominantly associate with local and regional identities over and above the broader categories of self-definition. Achilles, for example, strongly identifies himself with his native homeland of Phthia (Hom. *Il.* 1.154-157):

οὐ γὰρ πώποτ' ἐμὰς βοῦς ἦλασαν οὐδὲ μὲν ἵππους,
οὐδέ ποτ' ἐν Φθίῃ ἐριβώλακι βωτιανείρῃ

¹⁸ Winter (1995) 257.

¹⁹ See Baldry (1965) 9; Kirk (1985) 260-261; Konstan (2001) 31-32; J. M. Hall (2002) 111-118; Miller (2005) 69; Ross (2005) 309-315; Flower (2006) 276; Varisco (2007) 63-64; Kim (2009) 12-13; Skinner (2012) 50-62; Rollinger (2014) 131-133.

²⁰ Ἕλληνες first defines the Greeks as a collective in the fragment of Hecataeus' *Periodos Ges* mentioned earlier (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 119, *ap.* Strabo 7.7.1). Kirk (1985) 202 believes that the term πανέλληνες at Hom. *Il.* 2.530 is a later interpolation and not a valid indicator of strong panhellenic sentiment in Homer's time. The Greek geographer Strabo (c. 64 BC – AD 24) implies that both Hesiod and Archilochus, poets living in the seventh century BC, used πανέλληνες to signify a communal body of Greek peoples (Hes. *Cat.* F 78; Archil. F 102, *ap.* Strabo 8.6.6 = Most; Gerber); Carter (2011) 354 states that "The word entails mass assembly of Hellenes hailing from diverse *poleis* and social groups linked by genealogy, language, history, religion, and cultural character to perform and witness self-defining group rituals at significant locations, often in the form of culture-specific competitions for superlative honours."

καρπὸν ἐδηλήσαντ', ἐπεὶ ἡ μάλα πολλὰ μεταξὺ
οὔρεά τε σκιάοντα θάλασσά τε ἠχήεσσα.

For never have they [the Trojans] driven off my oxen or my horses,
nor ever in fertile Phthia, nurse of men
did they plunder the harvest, since very many things are between us,
both shadowy mountains and echoing sea.

The concept of “Greek” is inchoate in Homer’s epics. The antithetical concept of “barbarian” is scarcely discernible. The fifth-century Athenian historian Thucydides explains that it is contrived to project the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity onto the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (Thuc. 1.3.3):

οὐ μὲν οὐδὲ βαρβάρους εἴρηκε διὰ τὸ μηδὲ Ἑλληνάς πω, ὥς ἐμοὶ
δοκεῖ, ἀντίπαλον ἐς ἓν ὄνομα ἀποκεκρίσθαι.

He [Homer] does not even use the term barbarians, it seems to me, because the Hellenes were yet to be distinguished by one name from the rest of the world.

The Trojan barbarian was an invention of a much later time and context. It was during the fifth century BC that some Greek intellectuals, such as the poet Simonides of Ceos (c. 556 – 468 BC), began to reinterpret the Trojans as historical antecedents of the contemporary Persian enemy.²¹ In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the boundaries between Greek and non-Greek peoples are extremely hazy. The epics depict the Greeks as part of an eastern Mediterranean *koine*, culturally similar in many ways to their wartime antagonists the Trojans. The combatants on both sides at Troy largely recognise the same warrior values, code of ethics and pantheon of gods. All strive to achieve everlasting glory (κλέος) through the demonstration of manly courage (ἀνδρεία), the reciprocal conferral of honour (τιμή), and the display of modesty (αἰδώς). The cultural ties between the Greeks and the Trojans are exhibited poignantly by the refusal of

²¹ E. Hall (1989) 21, 47-51; Ross (2005) 301; Brosius (2006) 76; Mitchell (2007) 10-11. Simonides’ equation of the Trojan War with the Persian Wars occurs in his fragmentary “Battle of Plataea” elegy: see New Simon. F 11, *ap. POxy* 2327, F 5 = Boedeker and Sider.

Achaean prince Diomedes and Glaucus, ally of Troy, to engage in mortal combat due to the bond of guest friendship (ξενία) shared by their grandfathers (Hom. *Il.* 6.215-237). Likewise, when Achilles eventually returns Hector's corpse to Priam and pledges to observe the appropriate period of mourning, it highlights that the two warring sides abide by similar moral and cultural systems (Hom. *Il.* 24.507-595). Edith Hall has pointed out that there exists deep-seated hostility between the Greek invaders and the non-Greek invaded in the *Iliad*. The hostility operates primarily on a military plane between aristocratic warriors, as opposed to a cultural and ethical plane between civilisations. The military opposition is counterbalanced by cultural association, which, as Hall indicates, serves to integrate conceptually into the Greek world Troy and the lands of western Asia Minor that the Greeks were colonising in Homer's time:

At a non-literal level the poets of the *Iliad* were producing a discourse which tamed and subordinated in the Greek imagination the land mass which came to be known as Asia, by creating Troy, representing the words and deeds and defeats of the Trojans and their allies. Asia was thus familiarized and defused by assimilation into hexameter poetry, the common property of the Greek-speakers' archaic intellectual world. The celebration of Greek victory over the inhabitants of Asia Minor must legitimize the actions of the colonizers and express the spirit of the age when Greek cities were beginning to expand self-confidently all over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.²²

In a monograph entitled *Greek Art and the Orient* (2009), Ann Gunter contradicts the likes of Said and Winter by arguing that a symbolic divide between Greeks and Orientals is absent from Homer's epics. She contends that Homer neither renders non-Greek peoples as part of a homogeneous barbarian genus, nor does he conceive of a uniform barbarian cultural block in Asia (the Orient). He instead populates the world of the epics with discrete ethno-cultural identities that take precedence over broader categories of identification, such as barbarian and/or Oriental.²³ The use of βαρβαρόφωνοι ("foreign language speakers") to describe the

²² E. Hall (1989) 47-48.

²³ Gunter (2009) 51-53. As Rollinger (2014) 131-133 notes, the idea that the Orient originated as a concept in ancient Greek thought, perhaps even as far back as Homer, is still pervasive. Rollinger deems

Carians in the *Iliad* is a red herring for the history of Greek-barbarian polarity (Hom. *Il.* 2.867). An adjectival cognate, it refers directly to language, stressing how unusual Carian speech sounded to the Greek ear. The Augustan geographer Strabo states that βαρβαρόφωνοι described the harsh, accented way in which the Carians tried to pronounce Greek words (Strabo 14.2.28).²⁴ S. A. Ross explains that the Carians' peculiar speech fits into a linguistic context wherein all the Achaean Greek tribes fighting at Troy speak uniformly enough that they can understand one another. In contrast, the Trojans' allied forces are comprised of diverse groups speaking many different mutually unintelligible languages. The linguistic variation on the Trojan side hints that the notion of a monolithic barbarian category is unimportant to Homer. The ability to communicate with one another is a trait that unifies the Achaeans and sets them apart from the enemy's pluralistic mass of soldiers. The label βαρβαρόφωνοι is unique to the Carians, differentiating them not only from the Achaean Greeks, but also from the rest of the Trojans' allies.²⁵ The perceived unusualness of the Carians takes a pejorative turn when Homer disparages one of their leaders for overindulgence and effeminacy: ὃς καὶ χρυσὸν ἔχων πόλεμον δ' ἔεν ἥν τε κούρη/ νήπιος ("And he being foolish came to the war wearing gold like a girl" – Hom. *Il.* 2.872-873). The tenor of this portrayal is idiosyncratic to the Carians and therefore not symptomatic of a blanket anti-barbarian sentiment. Homer's representation of another ethno-cultural group, the Phoenicians, is equally idiosyncratic. In the epics, the Phoenicians are industrious, respected for their talents in seafaring and craftsmanship (Hom. *Il.* 23.742-745). At the same time though, they are notoriously deceitful and greedy tricksters (Hom. *Od.* 14.288-289, 15.416). Winter has claimed that these adverse character traits are integral to the classification of the Phoenicians as barbarian and Oriental. Mark, Abulafia and Woolmer all argue, however, that neither the Phoenicians nor non-Greeks in general are the targets of Homer's scorn; it is, rather, mercantilism and the roguish behaviour that it entails. The Greeks associated mercantilism with the Phoenicians above all other peoples. Homer derides the merchant's ideology of trade for profit because it clashes

the idea of ancient Greek Orientalism to be a facile, ideologically motivated retrojection of modern European culture that ignores the diversity of the Near Eastern peoples portrayed by Homer.

²⁴ On Strabo's discussion of the βαρβαρόφωνοι Carians, see Baldry (1965) 9; Kirk (1985) 260-261; Almagor (2005) 44-46.

²⁵ Ross (2005) 299, 304-305, 314-315.

with the Homeric principle of trade by aristocratic gift exchange for the purpose of self-sufficiency, as opposed to commercial gain.²⁶

The notion of Greek-barbarian polarity is evidently lacking from the inceptive expressions of panhellenism conveyed in Homeric verse. The barbarian, as a category of superficially homogeneous anti-Greeks, entered into the Greek cultural consciousness during the second half of the sixth century BC. Still, until the Persian Wars, the construction of collective Greek identity was a peripheral issue of ethno-cultural self-definition. Participation in the coalition of Greek allies formed to ward off the Persian invasion came to represent a badge of Greekness, despite the fact that some Greeks, most notably the Thebans from the central mainland and the Ionians from western Anatolia, fought on the side of the Persians in several battles (Hdt. 7.132.1).²⁷ The Persian Wars significantly contributed to a reorientation of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. The memory and fear of foreign invasion induced the Greeks to see their intracultural commonalities as relatively insignificant in their own right, yet instrumental in demarcating the antithesis between Greeks and barbarians. Benjamin Isaac disputes the above chronology of Greek-barbarian polarity. In *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (2005), Isaac claims that the polarity seldom mattered until the late fifth and fourth centuries BC, amid Greek civil warfare and the growing fervour for a panhellenic crusade against Persia.²⁸ The most intense anti-barbarian rhetoric in the corpus can be observed in the extant speeches of Athenian oratory. For instance, Gorgias (c. 485 – 380 BC) gave a speech at the Olympic Games in 408 BC, in which he advocated vehemently for the Greeks to put aside their disputes and unite in exacting vengeance upon the Persians (Gorg. F 29, 43, *ap.* Philostr. *V S*, 1.9.4-5 = Graham). H. J. Kim has convincingly critiqued Isaac by illustrating that Greek-barbarian polarity was a topical issue in Greek literature of the early and mid-fifth century BC.²⁹ Athens was the hotbed of anti-barbarian sentiment over the course of the Persian invasion and the intermittent conflict that followed between the Athenian-led

²⁶ Mark (2005) 20-22; Abulafia (2011) 88; Woolmer (2011) 80-82; see also the arguments of Dougherty (2001) 111; Skinner (2012) 60: both scholars suggest that the mercantile Phoenicians act as a foil for the idealised non-mercantile Phaeacians.

²⁷ After the Battle of Plataea (479 BC), the Greeks dedicated the “Serpent Column” to Apollo at Delphi. Upon this column there is an inscription listing and commemorating the thirty-one Greek city-states that fought united against the Persians in the battle (Hdt. 9.81.1). The Roman Emperor Constantine (r. AD 306 – 337) moved the column to Constantinople (Istanbul), where it still resides today: see Abulafia (2011) 132.

²⁸ Isaac (2004) 283-288; (2009) 52-53.

²⁹ See Kim (2009) 22; see also Mitchell (2006) 221-222.

Delian League and Persia.³⁰ Greek-barbarian polarity is also a popular motif in the contemporary Athenian material culture. It is conspicuous on the Parthenon friezes, which contain many allusions to the conflicts between Greece and Persia.³¹

The Athenian image of the Persian enemy came to personify the archetypal barbarian. The Athenian playwright Aeschylus (c. 525 – 456 BC) uses the word βάρβαρος in a derogatory manner to condense the Persians and their numerous subject peoples into an alien and malevolent conglomerate that comprised the invasion force of King Xerxes I (r. 486 – 465 BC) (Aesch. *Pers.* 181-200, 434-435, 798-799). In art, one cannot ignore the “Eurymedon Vase,” which dates from c. 460 BC (see fig. 1, pg. 25). The vase commemorates the victory of the Delian League over the Persians in a battle near the mouth of the Eurymedon River in Pamphylia (466 BC). The use of aggressive sexual imagery insinuates that the defeated Persians are inferior to the triumphant Greeks.³² Throughout the fifth century BC, the Athenians called attention to their own leading role in warding off the Persian threat in the major battles at Marathon (490 BC), Salamis (480 BC), Eurymedon and Cyprian Salamis (449 BC). Athenian propaganda declared Greek military and cultural superiority over the Persian barbarian. As J. M. Hall asserts, the demonisation of the barbarian served as the *raison d’être* for the Delian League. It legitimised Athens’ demands for tribute from nominal allies, with the League transformed into an empire by the middle of the century.³³ The Athenians also proclaimed themselves to be superior to all the other Greeks. The folktale of Athenian autochthony on the mainland, descended from the indigenous pre-Greek Pelasgians, was interpreted to support the claim of Athenian exceptionalism (Hdt. 1.56.2 – 1.58.1;

³⁰ In principle, the Delian League was an allied confederation of over 150 Greek city-states established after the Persian Wars. Its purpose was to free the Ionians of Asia Minor from Persian rule, to defend against any future Persian attacks, and to divide up the spoils of war (Thuc. 1.96.1-2). By the 450s, the League had already become a tool of Athenian conquest used to prosecute war and taxation, and expand Athens’ hegemony in rivalry with the Spartan-led Peloponnesian League: see Rhodes (2007) 35; Hornblower (2011) 15-47.

³¹ For discussion of the friezes, see esp. Pollitt (1972) 81-82; Price and Thonemann (2010) 116; Hornblower (2011) 9-10, 33.

³² Francis (1990) 39; J. M. Hall (2002) 176-179, 187-189; Shapiro (2009) 57-58; Miller (2011) 123-25; cf. Gruen (2011b) 44-45, who refuses to read Greek-barbarian polarity into the vase’s imagery. The vase depicts a bearded man holding his erect phallus while approaching a Persian archer, who is bent forward with his hands held up, accompanied by the inscription, “I am Eurymedon, I am bent over.” Gruen argues that the vase has a definite comic flavour, lacking any serious implications relating to a perceived cultural clash between Greek and barbarian. It should be noted that the comedy embedded in the image does not weaken the derogatory associations or its function as a display of cultural antithesis.

³³ J. M. Hall (2002) 187-189, 202-203. Athens and the Delian League were not universally successful against the Persians. The most notable setback occurred from 460 to 454 BC when the League’s forces attempted to support an Egyptian revolt from Persia. The Greeks were eventually routed by the Persians (Thuc. 1.112.3-5). This disaster incited some panic and prompted the relocation of the League’s treasury from Delos to Athens: see esp. Hornblower (2011) 40-42.

Eur. *Ion*, 589-590; Thuc. 1.1.3, 2.16.1 – 2.17.1, 2.36.1).³⁴ What can be termed a concept of “Greek civilisation” took firm shape in the Delian League era, rendering the Greeks as a people with a culture and history to call their own. Greek civilisation was distinct from that of the barbarian, a concept embodied by the inhabitants of the Achaemenid Persian Empire.³⁵ The Athenian derivation and bias of most of our extant primary sources means that the priority given to panhellenic sentiments is perhaps overstated.³⁶ S. M. Burstein argues that it was not until the Hellenistic Age that the term “Greek” emerged as the designation for a person’s primary identity over and above narrower frames of reference like “Athenian” or “Ionian.”³⁷ Panhellenism’s import to the individual average Greek compared to other categories of ethno-cultural identification is difficult to quantify. Collective Greek identity was one among several ethno-cultural identities that contributed to a Greek person’s sense of being.

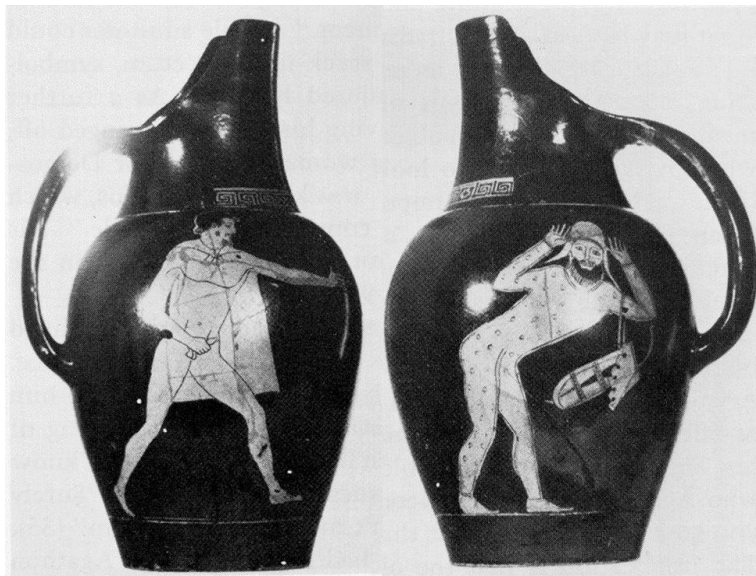


Fig. 1: Eurymedon Vase (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Attic red-figure, c. 460 BC: 1981.73). Source: <http://www.homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~vwohl/images/Eurymedon.jpg>

³⁴ The Pelasgian foundation story was a fifth-century coinage, replacing the belief that the Athenians had always been Ionian: see J. M. Hall (2002) 31; Mitchell (2006) 219; McInerney (2014b) 26; see also Munson (2014) 345-346, who highlights the contradictions in the Athenian claim of exceptionalism. The Athenians were autochthonous to the mainland, but descended from non-Greek (Pelasgian) stock, whereas the Dorian Greeks were the original Greek speakers, but also immigrants to the mainland.

³⁵ On the Athenocentric aspect of Greek-barbarian polarity, see E. Hall (1989) 2-11; Tuplin (1996) 132; Champion (2004) 34-36; Vlassopoulos (2007b) 189; Gehrke (2009) 88; Malkin (2011) 205.

³⁶ Champion (2004) 34-36. Vlassopoulos (2007b) 189 asserts that not all Greeks predicated their ethno-cultural worldview on the Greek-barbarian dichotomy. For example, in *Magna Graecia* (southern Italy), many non-Greek peoples were allowed to acquire citizenship in the Greek *poleis*. In Athens, citizenship laws were far more restrictive and exclusive.

³⁷ Burstein (2003) 219.

Analysis of the circumstances and origin of the ancient Greek ethnogenesis provides a temporal framework for this thesis' study of how the continents and the Mediterranean Sea were involved in ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. It can be deduced that evidence for their involvement should be sought out especially in the primary source material of sixth-century Ionia and fifth-century Athens. It is in those cultural contexts that the antithetical notions of Greekness and barbarism first gain substantial traction.

The next section of this chapter examines how classical scholarship has interpreted the delineation of Greek and barbarian as categories of identification in the primary sources.

Delineating “Greek” and “Barbarian”

Classicists hold a wide variety of views about how the ancient Greeks considered themselves to be separated from barbarians. Most analyses of the issue proceed from the understanding that ethno-cultural identities are socially constructed. Edith Hall equates that understanding with a subjective means of defining ethnicity:

Definitions of ethnicity fall into two categories; the subjective and the objective. The subjective definition treats ethnicity as a process by which tribes, “races,” or nation-states identify themselves, other groups, and the boundaries between them; the objective definition relies on such “real” criteria as physical characteristics resulting from a shared gene-pool.³⁸

Ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction lacked an objective biological basis. Greek communal groups consciously and subjectively formulated the criteria of their identification, invoking genealogical connections and socio-cultural commonalities. Familial ties, language, temperament, dress, religious beliefs, moral values, education and political institutions were all assimilated into the delineation of Greek and

³⁸ E. Hall (1989) 3. Note that “ethnicity” is a modern coinage with its first documented occurrence in 1953. It is adapted from the Greek word ἔθνος, a category of ethno-cultural definition that existed alongside the *polis* and had no sole, agreed upon form of constitution: see LSJ (1940) s.v. ἔθνος: 480; Morgan (2003) s.v. ethnicity: 558-559. The meaning of ἔθνος is not easily translated into modern English – common translations include “ethnic group,” “tribe,” “family,” “nation,” and “country.”

barbarian.³⁹ Herodotus' classic definition of Greekness draws attention to the main factors that shaped panhellenism in Athens at the time of the Persian Wars. He has the Athenians explain to the Spartans why they will never desert to the side of the barbarian invaders. The Athenians reason that they must do their part for the cause because they are united with the rest of the Greeks by shared blood (ὄμαιμόν), speech (ὁμόγλωσσον), religious observance (θεῶν ἰδρύματ' ἀ τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι) and way of life (ὁμότροπα) (Hdt. 8.144.2). The definition of Greekness via its contrast with barbarism was often effected through stereotypes. These stereotypes were prescribed beliefs and expectations about Greek culture and non-Greek culture that did not always accurately reflect reality. In many of the primary sources, barbarians are demarcated by way of a collection of stereotypes alien to Greek norms, providing a framework for the audience to understand the seemingly strange and unusual aspects of foreign cultures.⁴⁰

As Hdt. 8.144.2 highlights, genealogy played some part in the construction of collective Greek identity. Its relative level of importance, however, is disputed. F. W. Walbank investigated the matter in his famous article "The Problem of Greek Nationality," originally published in 1951. Walbank argued that the ancient Greeks conceived of a unity comparable to modern nationhood, which placed emphasis on ancestral interrelations. A conviction of common ethnic descent made *Hellas*, in Walbank's words, "something more than an international society of autonomous city-states."⁴¹ J. M. Hall offers a revised interpretation. He suggests that the idea of a shared Greek lineage was most influential against the backdrop of Archaic period colonisation. Venturing out from their homelands and founding colonies around the Mediterranean, the Greeks promulgated a putative myth of overarching kinship and descent from Hellen that bonded them all together. Over time though, the case for the Greeks' mono-genetic origin became significantly muddled, as the four major tribes and countless Greek *poleis* propagated their own individual foundation stories, evoking heterogeneous

³⁹ E. Hall (1989) 165 states that "Ethnicity is a process by which a group conceptualises its difference from others in order to heighten its own sense of community and belongingness. Ethnic boundaries are therefore social constructs, not facts of nature, and as such are liable to be arbitrary and ambiguous"; see also Dougherty and Kurke (2003) 3, 8.

⁴⁰ The first usage of "stereotype" in the modern psychological sense is found in American journalist Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, published in 1922. He argued that people use stereotypes with the aim to make sense of complex socio-political and cultural environments. For discussion of the function and importance of stereotypes in ancient Greek ethnography, see E. Hall (1989) 102-103; Miller (2000) 442; Dougherty (2001) 10; Harrison (2002) 4-7; Miller (2011) 126-128; Skinner (2012) 115-121.

⁴¹ Republished in Walbank (2002b) 246; see also Finley (1954) 256-257.

genealogical traditions.⁴² Many of these traditions appropriated well-known non-Greek progenitors, such as Anatolian Pelops (Pisa), Egyptian Danaus (Argos), and Phoenician Cadmus (Thebes).⁴³ While perceived ancestral ties were obviously formative in the Greeks' sense of collective identity, socio-cultural factors gradually increased in importance as the Greeks started to encounter and differentiate themselves from more and more barbarian peoples. The Greeks were unfazed that they formed an ancestrally diverse people comprised of numerous local, regional and tribal ethno-cultural identities. Panhellenic sentiments emerged among different Greek populations under certain sets of circumstances, but coalesced to establish a canon of νόμοι ("customs/conventions/social norms") – the hallmarks of Greek culture.

Extant sophistic writings from fifth-century Athens point to an ongoing debate among intellectuals about which aspects of the human make-up stemmed from societal custom (νόμος) and which stemmed from intrinsic nature (φύσις). The sophists became especially influential in the second half of the century, lecturing in various subjects and employing rhetorical techniques to persuade their audiences. Many sophists placed great importance on *nomos*, arguing that it outweighed *phusis* in the shaping of human character. *Nomos* was culture specific and therefore a critical apparatus in the differentiation of Greek from all things non-Greek. The influence of such thinking is found throughout the primary sources. In Euripides' *Suppliants* (423 BC), common *nomoi* unite the inhabitants of *Hellas*. Theseus' mother Aethra instructs the hero (Eur. *Supp.* 311-313):

νόμιμά τε πάσης συγχέοντας Ἑλλάδος
παῦσαι· τὸ γάρ τοι συνέχον ἀνθρώπων πόλεις
τοῦτ' ἔσθ', ὅταν τις τοὺς νόμους σῶζῃ καλῶς.

To check those who are confounding the customs of all *Hellas*;
for it is this that holds together men's city-states,
good observance of the customs.⁴⁴

⁴² J. M. Hall (2001) 165-172; (2002) 28-35.

⁴³ See e.g. Eur. *Archelaus*, F 228, *ap.* Tiberius, *On Figures*, 48 = Collard and Cropp: the fragment states that Danaus travelled from Egypt to Greece, founding the *polis* of Argos. On the non-Greek elements found in ancient Greek foundation stories, see Walbank (2002b) 246; Finkelberg (2005) 16-18; Gehrke (2005) 51; Miller (2005) 68, 73, 85; Skinner (2012) 23-25, 107, 152.

⁴⁴ For comparable references to common Greek *nomoi* in the Euripidean corpus, see Eur. *Med.* 536-538; Eur. F 853, *ap.* Stob. *Flor.* 3.1.80 = Collard and Cropp.

In Euripides' *Bacchae* (405 BC), Pentheus, King of Thebes, states that because Dionysus' barbarian followers celebrate unusual religious rites, they are more foolish than Greeks. Dionysus believes that Pentheus is wrong, insisting that the *nomoi* of the barbarians are merely different from those of the Greeks (Eur. *Bacch.* 482-484). A contemporary of Euripides, Thucydides locates Greeks and barbarians on a linear continuum of human cultural evolution. The barbarian, he suggests, is a transient category, indicative of a primitive stage of cultural development. Barbarians observe *nomoi* that the Greeks observed early in their history, when they were less culturally sophisticated (Thuc. 1.6.1-6). The rhetorician Isocrates, writing in the mid-fourth century BC, has a similar perspective. He argues that the cultural sophistication of Athens and its influence on the rest of *Hellas* had made panhellenism more an issue of *nomos* than *physis*. Greekness boils down to education (παιδεία) and lifestyle (Isoc. *Paneg.* 50):

τοσοῦτον δ' ἀπολέλοιπεν ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν περὶ τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ λέγειν
 τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους, ὥσθ' οἱ ταύτης μαθηταὶ τῶν ἄλλων
 διδάσκαλοι γεγόνاسι, καὶ τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποίηκε μηκέτι
 τοῦ γένους ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἑλλήνας
 καλεῖσθαι τοὺς τῆς παιδείας τῆς ἡμετέρας ἢ τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς
 φύσεως μετέχοντας.

And so far has our city-state [Athens] left behind the rest of humankind in thought and speech that its students have become the teachers of everyone else, and it has made the name Hellenes no longer of a race but of a mentality it seems, and Hellenes is applied rather to those sharing our cultural education than to those sharing a common nature.⁴⁵

The idea that ethno-cultural identity was moulded by common *nomoi* contributed to the development of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism was a minor but influential approach within ancient Greek ethnography. Proponents of the approach

⁴⁵ For discussion of the views shared by Thucydides and Isocrates on the issue of *nomos* and its place in the construction of panhellenism, see Baldry (1965) 46-47; Dihle (1994) 49; J. M. Hall (2001) 172; (2002) 195; Nippel (2002) 288; Champion (2004) 6; Gruen (2006) 296.

perceived ancient societies as having *nomoi* reflective of their own distinct needs and circumstances. Moreover, they asserted that every person judges others in accordance with what is considered normal in their own culture. *Nomoi* are therefore both culturally specific and culturally relative. Moral judgements made about them are subjective, conveyed through the lens of the observer's culture, who usually decides that the *nomoi* of their own culture are best.⁴⁶ One of the most famous sophists, Antiphon (*fl. c.* late 5th cent. BC), adopts a cultural relativist perspective in an extant fragment. He declares that the *nomoi* esteemed by one society might be reviled by another, meaning that all peoples have the potential to be barbarians in the eyes of one another (Antiphon, F 46b, *ap. POxy.* XI 1363 + 3647, F 2 = Graham):

[τοὺς νόμους τῶν ἐγγυτέ]ρων ἐπ[ιστάμε]θά τε κ[αὶ] σέβομεν], τοὺς δὲ
[τῶν τῇ]λοῦ οἰκ[ούν]των οὔτε ἐπ[ιστ]άμεθα οὔτε σεβόμεν. ἐν τ[ο]ύτῳ
οὖν πρὸς ἀλλήλους βεβαρβαρώμεθα, ἐπεὶ φύσει γε πάντα πάντες
ὁμοίως πεφύκ[α]μεν καὶ βάρβαροι καὶ Ἕλληνας εἶναι.

[The customs of those nearby] we both understand and respect, but those of people living far away we neither understand nor respect. So in this way we have become barbarians to each other, since we have indeed in all ways been equally fitted by nature to be both barbarians and Greeks.

Herodotus traverses the same point of view in book two of his *Histories*. He shows that the barbarian is not exclusively a Greek concept, stating that βαρβάρους δὲ πάντας οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι καλέουσι τοὺς μὴ σφίσι ὁμογλώσσους (“The Egyptians call all those who do not speak the same language as them barbarians” – Hdt. 2.158.5). It is implied here that in the minds of others, the Greeks themselves are the barbarians. In book three, Herodotus furthermore tells a thematically related story about some Greeks at the court of the Persian king Darius I (r. 522 – 486 BC). The Greeks are horrified when the king asks them how much money it would take for them to eat their fathers’ corpses. Some Indians at the court, who do eat their fathers’ corpses, are equally horrified when the king asks what would persuade them to burn the bodies like the Greeks do. The point of

⁴⁶ On ancient Greek cultural relativism, see Baldry (1965) 1; Coleman (1997) 197; Munson (2001) 163; Redfield (2002) 25-32; Whitmarsh (2004) 167; Munson (2005) 4, 66, 77; Rood (2006) 298-299; Thomas (2006) 69-70; Zacharia (2008) 24; Thomas (2011) 239-246; Munson (2014) 352.

the story is that all peoples hold their own *nomoi* in higher regard than those *nomoi* of peoples foreign to them (Pind. F 169a1, *ap.* Hdt. 3.38.1-4 = Race):

εἰ γὰρ τις προθείη πᾶσι ἀνθρώποισι ἐκλέξασθαι κελεύων νόμους τοὺς
καλλίστους ἐκ τῶν πάντων νόμων, διασκεψάμενοι ἂν ἐλοίατο
ἕκαστοι τοὺς ἑωυτῶν· οὕτω νομίζουσι πολλόν τι καλλίστους τοὺς
ἑωυτῶν νόμους ἕκαστοι εἶναι...καὶ ὀρθῶς μοι δοκέει Πίνδαρος
ποιῆσαι νόμον πάντων βασιλέα φήσας εἶναι.

For if it were proposed to all peoples to choose which customs are best of all, each, after making an examination would place its own first; in this way each thinks that its own customs are by far the best...and it seems to me that Pindar is correct to make the statement that custom is king of all.⁴⁷

The knowledge that *nomoi* are culturally relative challenges the validity of the barbarian as a category of pejorative characterisation. The exploration of Greek-barbarian polarity was a staple of ancient Greek ethnography; however, conviction of the polarity's validity was not absolute.

Setting aside the topic of cultural relativism for now, it is widely asserted that the ancient Greeks valued shared language as a critical criterion of Greekness. Several dialects and sub-dialects developed across the Greek diaspora. Still, Greeks who spoke different dialects could understand one another. They lived in oral societies wherein Homer's epics and other panhellenic sagas were performed aloud by itinerant bards. E. Hall argues that the diversity of customs among Greek populations determined that the shared Greek language transcended other panhellenic criteria:

The priority of the linguistic criterion in the Greeks' self-determination of their ethnicity is not surprising when one considers their geographical dispersal over numerous coasts and countless islands, and the enormous

⁴⁷ Asheri, et al. (2007) 435 sum up Herodotus' point of view: "he draws the conclusion that all human beliefs and customs belong to the history of civilization; that there is no objective measure for rating the merits and demerits of each culture; that therefore diversity deserves respect; and finally, that although 'customs' are very different on a universal level, their authority is absolute and undisputed within each culture. The choice of the individual is determined by a personal or collective attachment to tradition, or by a rational conviction."

variety in way of life, political allegiance, cult, and tradition amongst the different communities, whether Ionian, Dorian, or Aeolian.⁴⁸

The primary sources substantiate the hypothesis that the ancient Greeks considered shared language to be a critical criterion of their collective identity. There is evidence, for example, that the only restrictions on admission into the popular and panhellenic Eleusinian Mysteries were placed upon those who had committed murder or spoke in an incomprehensible tongue (schol. Ar. *Ran.* 369). Moreover, one of the foremost connotations of the word βάρβαρος defined a barbarian as someone unable to speak and understand the Greek vernacular.⁴⁹ In various instances, the sources fiercely deride foreign language, implying that it is a symptom of cultural inferiority (Ar. *Ach.* 100; Ar. *Babylonians*, F 81b, *ap.* Poll. *Onom.* 4.108-109 = Henderson). In his fragmentary play the *Persians* (c. late 5th cent. BC), the Milesian poet Timotheus relates how Persian captives at the Battle of Salamis attempted to beseech the Greeks with an unintelligible Ἑλλάδ' ἐμπλέκων Ἀσιάδι φωνᾷ (“mixture of Greek and Asian speech” – Timoth. *Pers.* F 791, *ap.* P *Berol.* 9875 = Campbell). Language acts as a symbolic cultural barrier between the two sides, the articulate, civilised Greeks triumphing over the pitiable and inarticulate Persians.

Alongside shared language, political ideology and institutions played a salient role in the definition of Greekness. The political aspect of panhellenism became especially important in Athens in the wake of the Persian invasion. The Athenians propagandised the battles at Marathon, Salamis, Plataea and Mycale (479 BC) as victories for the laws and freedoms (αὐτονομία) of the Athenian *polis* over the despotism of the Achaemenid Persian Empire.⁵⁰ Athens' citizens believed their democracy to represent the zenith of Greek political life. Delian League propaganda promoted Athens as the virtuous polar opposite of the oppressive Persian monarchy.

⁴⁸ E. Hall (1989) 4-5; see also Coleman (1997) 178; Nippel (2002) 281; Cole (2004) 12; Ross (2005) 314; Anson (2009) 6, 21-24; Abulafia (2011) 83; Skinner (2012) 120; Wrenhaven (2012) 22. J. M. Hall (2002) 111-117 dissents, emphasising that the Greek language was comprised of different dialects. He argues that the dialects' linguistic dissimilarities meant that shared language cannot have been considered a prime determinant of collective Greek identity.

⁴⁹ See Hom. *Il.* 2.867; Anac. F 423, *ap.* Hdn. *On Non-Greek Words and Solecisms* = Campbell; Heraclitus, F 22, *ap.* Sext. Emp. *Math.* 7.126; Stob. *Flor.* 3.4.54 = Graham; Aesch. *Pers.* 434-435, 798-799; *Supp.* 118, 130, 235-236, 972-973, 994-995; Hdt. 6.138.2, 8.144.2; Eur. *IT*, 180; Thuc. 2.68.5-6; Strabo 14.2.28.

⁵⁰ On the political aspect of panhellenism, see Diller (1961) 44-45; E. Hall (1989) 2-5, 16-17, 100; de Romilly (1993) 283-288; Gray (1995) 201; Hartog (2001) 84; Munson (2001) 26; Saïd (2001) 99-100;

Democratic rights and freedoms instilled the Athenians with qualities of excellence (ἀρετή) that overcame the battlefield exploits of the Persian barbarians, all of whom, except the Great King, were slaves to despotism. The dichotomy of free Athenian Greek and slavish Persian barbarian is a major theme in some primary sources, notably Aeschylus' *Persians* and Herodotus' *Histories* (Aesch. *Pers.* 181-200; Hdt. 5.78.1, 7.35.1-3, 7.147.1). As Pericles Georges states, "Tyranny was thus a principal cultural marker of barbarism."⁵¹ The practice of chattel slavery, in which non-Greeks were primarily the capital, reinforced Greek assertions of their cultural, political and military superiority.⁵² Aristotle, in the *Politics*, famously describes non-Greek peoples as naturally predisposed to be slaves (Arist. *Pol.* 1254b16-19, 1255a-b). It is important to note that there were limitations to the identification of free with Greek, and slave with barbarian – Greek ethno-cultural self-definition was not restricted to the idiosyncratic world of democratic Athens and not all barbarians known to the Greeks lived under autocratic regimes.

Commentary on how the ancient Greeks distinguished themselves from barbarians has also delved into the issue of racism. The word racism is highly emotive and lacks a universally accepted definition. It is a post-Darwinian concept that divides humanity into distinct permanent human types: "races." These races are deemed to have distinctive gene pools, which engender specific physical and cultural characteristics. Racists direct prejudice and abuse against specific races that they consider to be intrinsically inferior to their own. They perceive certain physical features, such as skin colour, as undesirable and emblematic of cultural backwardness.⁵³ F. M. Snowden, in his works, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (1970) and *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (1983) established the conventional view on the subject of racism in classical antiquity. He argued that the ancient Greeks were largely free of any racially charged intolerance, despite the sources

Nippel (2002) 289-293; Raaflaub (2004) 56, 86; Munson (2005) 2; Mitchell (2007) 77-80; Anson (2009) 22; Gehrke (2009) 88; Kim (2009) 49; Meier (2012) 26-28, 37.

⁵¹ Georges (1994) 37. The opinion that individual liberties and political equality are desirable, while tyranny is undesirable and barbaric, recurs in the plays of Euripides: see e.g. Eur. *IA*, 1400-1401; *Med.* 119-121; Eur. *Auge*, F 275, *ap.* Stob. *Flor.* 4.8.3 = Collard and Cropp.

⁵² On the relationship between Greek-barbarian polarity and the ideology of Greek chattel slavery, see Cartledge (1993) 41; de Romilly (1993) 283-288; Coleman (1997) 180, 189; Hornblower (2011) 10-13; Wrenhaven (2012) 2-3, 6, 13. Wrenhaven (2013) 2-3 points out that Greeks enslaving Greeks was the exception not the rule, with the sources expressing a prevailing aversion to the idea. Spartan helotage was different from slavery, reducing conquered Greek peoples to permanent serfdom: see Tordoff (2013) 5.

⁵³ For thorough discussion of the concepts of race and racism in the modern world, see esp. Banton (1977).

showing an interest in the physical dissimilarities between ethno-cultural groups.⁵⁴ A fragment of Xenophanes explains how some peoples conceive of the gods in their own image: (Xenophanes, F 21, *ap. Clem. Al. Strom.* 7.22 = Graham):

Αἰθίοπές τε [θεοὺς σφετέρους] σιμούς μελανάς τε
Θρηϊκές τε γλαυκοὺς καὶ πυρρούς [φάσι πέλεσθαι].

Ethiopians say that their gods are both snub-nosed and black,
Thracians say that theirs are both blue-eyed and red-haired.

Snowden asserted that an environmental theory of ethnic differences was the closest that the ancient Greeks came to racism. This “environmental determinism” held that different natural environments govern the development of particular physical and cultural characteristics among ethno-cultural groups.⁵⁵

One of the main purposes of the Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places* is to illustrate how the environment influenced human physique and culture. The author believes, for example, that the local climate and environment of Colchis (modern Georgia) is responsible for the physical deficiencies of the region’s inhabitants (Hippoc. *Aer.* 15.1-14):

περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐν Φάσει· ἡ χώρα ἐκείνη ἐλώδης ἐστὶ καὶ θερμὴ καὶ
ὑδατεινὴ καὶ δασεῖα, ὄμβροι τε αὐτόθι γίνονται πᾶσαν ὥρην πολλοί
τε καὶ ἰσχυροί...τὰ δὲ ὕδατα θερμὰ καὶ στάσιμα πίνουσιν ὑπὸ τε τοῦ
ἡλίου σηπόμενα καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὀμβρῶν ἐπαυξόμενα...οἱ τε καρποὶ οἱ
γινόμενοι αὐτόθι πάντες ἀναλδέες εἰσὶ καὶ τεθλησμένοι καὶ ἀτελέες
ὑπὸ πολυπληθείης τοῦ ὕδατος· διὸ καὶ οὐ πεπαίνονται...διὰ ταύτας
δὲ τὰς προφάσεις τὰ εἶδεα ἀπηλλαγμένα τῶν λοιπῶν ἀνθρώπων
ἔχουσιν οἱ Φασιηνοί· τὰ τε γὰρ μεγέθεα μεγάλοι, τὰ πάχεα δ’
ὑπερπάχητες, ἄρθρον τε κατάδηλον οὐδὲν οὐδὲ φλέψ· τὴν τε χροίην
ὠχρὴν ἔχουσιν ὥσπερ ὑπὸ ἰκτέρου ἐχόμενοι.

⁵⁴ Snowden (1970) 169, 176; (1983) 58-59, 63, 87.

⁵⁵ Snowden (1970) 169, 176; (1983) 58-59, 63, 87; for further discussion of environmental determinism’s place in ancient Greek thought, see Hay (1957) 4-6; Backhaus (1976) 170-185; Cartledge (1993) 39-40; Mikkeli (1998) 10; Kaplan (1999) 11-14, 22; Thomas (2000) 92-94; J. M. Hall (2002) 219; Isaac (2004) 72; Romm (2010) 221-225; Wrenhaven (2012) 48; Kaplan (2014) 303-305.

Concerning the inhabitants on the Phasis [Rioni]; their land is marshy, hot, wooded and wet, and many and violent rains occur there every season... The waters which they [the Phasians] drink are hot and stagnant both putrefied by the sun and swollen by the rains... The fruits that are here are all stunted, flabby and imperfect because of the excess of water; and for this reason they do not ripen... On account of these causes therefore the Phasians have dissimilar appearances from that of other people; for they are both tall in stature, and of a gross habit of body, and neither joint nor vein are visible; their complexion is yellow as if they have jaundice.

There are numerous other passages in the treatise highlighting how the environment plays a crucial part in shaping human behaviour, mentality and lifestyle – different types of environments nurture different types of cultures. In one such passage, people living in the east of the *oikoumene* are described as healthier, more energetic, more intelligent, of better complexion and of better temperament than those living in the north and south. These agreeable qualities are said to be the result of a temperate climate and pure drinking water (Hippoc. *Aer.* 5.1-28).⁵⁶

In his book *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (2004), Benjamin Isaac has controversially asserted that environmental determinism was the primary theoretical framework employed by the ancient Greeks to explain the differences between ethno-cultural groups. He puts forward a unique hypothesis which proposes that a substantial portion of ancient Greek ethnography can be equated with “proto-racism”:

The term proto-racism, then, may be used when Greek and Latin authors attribute to groups of people common characteristics considered to be unalterable because they are determined by external factors or hereditary.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ For comparable accounts of other parts of the *oikoumene*, see Hippoc. *Aer.* 12.10-45, 13.10-24, 23.1-41.

⁵⁷ Isaac (2004) 38.

In Isaac's estimation, the environmentally determinist approach found in *Airs, Waters, Places* is analogous with racial bias in that neither allow for individual diversity within a society:

The essence of racism is that it regards individuals as superior or inferior because they are believed to share imagined physical, mental, and moral attributes with the group to which they are deemed to belong, and it is assumed that they cannot change these traits individually.⁵⁸

Several reviewers have rightly criticised Isaac for softening the word racism to "proto-racism," as a means to associate the ancient Greeks anachronistically with what is in its true form a modern scientific concept of hereditary inferiority.⁵⁹ Isaac's critics also contest his opinion that the ancient Greeks viewed the environment as the primary determinant of human character. Even *Airs, Waters, Places*, the quintessential exposition of ancient Greek environmental determinism, acknowledges the crucial role that *nomoi* play in differentiating ethno-cultural groups. The writer states that a contributory cause of Asiatic meekness and military deficiency is their *nomoi* – most instrumental is the tradition of despotism that enslaves and enfeebles Asia's inhabitants (Hippoc. *Aer.* 16.3-43). Although the ancient Greeks identified ethno-cultural groups with distinctive physical and cultural characteristics moulded in part by the environment, none of the sources adjudge physical appearance to be a barometer of cultural superiority or inferiority. Different types of prejudice, including xenophobia, chauvinism and ethnocentrism, are therefore more applicable to the discussion of ancient Greek views of non-Greeks than proto-racism.⁶⁰

The analysis in this section has brought to attention a triad of factors, *phusis*, *nomos*, and the environment, involved in ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. On balance, across the source tradition common *nomoi* are given the most priority. The

⁵⁸ Isaac (2004) 23.

⁵⁹ For criticism of Isaac's work, see esp. Dee (2004); Champion (2005); Millar (2005); Richter (2006).

⁶⁰ Ethnocentrism and ethnic prejudice, as defined by Isaac (2009) 34, are different from racism in that the targets are afforded the presumption of choice or change. Racism is closely tied to *phusis* and the environment, which are seen to be permanent. Ethnocentrism and ethnic prejudice are associated more with *nomoi*, which are determined by free will and are variable. For the view that the ancient Greeks

emphasis on *nomoi* problematised the use of Greek and barbarian as oppositional categories of identification. In theory at least, non-Greeks were able to become Greek by adopting Greek *nomoi*.

The next section of this chapter accounts for the far-reaching impact that the modern concept of alterity has had on the study of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. The interpretative framework Orientalism receives a lengthy treatment, as it has especially affected perceptions of geography's role in ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition.

The Barbarians as Others and Orientals

Modern theoretical paradigms have long directed scholarly research into ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities. In particular, almost every work on the topic produced in the last few decades responds in some way to Said's concept of Orientalism. Said revolutionised cultural studies by critically examining the Western invention of the Orient/East. Focussing on post-Enlightenment British, French and North American academic texts, he argued that the Orient is a Eurocentric concept and product of a colonial discourse of knowledge and power – Orientalism.⁶¹ This discourse creates a negative image of the Orient which is intended to rationalise and vindicate the history of Western conquests in Asia over the last four-hundred years. Parts of Asia that were at one time or another territories ruled by Western powers include Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, some Persian Gulf states, India, Ceylon, Burma, Indochina and Malaya. Orientalism depicts Asia and its inhabitants as an amorphous and homogenous unit that represents a cultural inversion of the West. As a counterpoint to Western culture, the Orient derives substance and meaning from an assemblage of derogatory stereotypes, such as sensuality, a tendency toward despotism, aberrant mentality, habits of inaccuracy and cultural decadence. Said noted that the West has constructed the Orient as a weak, different and inferior cultural antonym:

lacked a racial consciousness, see Snowden (1970) 169, 176; Banton (1977) 13; Snowden (1983) 58-59, 63, 87; Coleman (1997) 189; Tuplin (1999) 47, 62-63; Champion (2004) 6; Gruen (2011b) 3.

⁶¹ Said's concept of Orientalism is grounded in the notion of discourse, explored most famously in Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). Generally speaking, a discourse is defined as a system of thought comprised of ideas, mind-sets and practices that systematically constructs the subjects and the worlds which it describes: for discussion, see Said (1978) 1-2.

Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness.⁶²

Orientalism is one of many apparatuses used to convey alterity. Alterity comes from the Latin *alter* denoting the other of two. It is a modern philosophical nomenclature referring to an Other that is the antithesis of the Self. The dichotomy of Self and Other operates within the wider interpretative framework of structuralism, pioneered in the humanities by the anthropological studies of Claude Lévi-Strauss.⁶³

Classics has co-opted the anthropological theory of structural dualism, which says that cultures organise their cognition via a discourse of opposites, to help understand ancient Greek thought patterns. In *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Greek Thought* (1966), G. E. R. Lloyd explained how primitive societies incline toward dualist classifications of ethics, politics and reality as a whole. He associated this dualism with the ancient Greeks, who often classified objects by their relation to one or other of a pair of opposite principles.⁶⁴ Paul Cartledge, in his book *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others* (1993), reaches similar conclusions. He identifies several jointly exhaustive and mutually exclusive Self versus Other binaries that structure ancient Greek cognition: Male/Female, Mortal/God, Citizen/Alien, Free/Slave, and Greek/Barbarian.⁶⁵ All non-Greeks were uniformly alien because of their perceived antithesis to all things Greek and thus all things normal. Prior to Cartledge, both François Hartog and Edith Hall authored seminal works which view Greek-barbarian polarity through the lens of alterity. In *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition Through Tragedy* (1989), Hall asserts that fifth-century Athenian tragedies construct the barbarian using stereotypes that translate all non-Greek peoples into a generic barbarian Other. The stereotypes minimise the diversity among the world's non-Greek peoples and establish them as adversaries of Greek culture.⁶⁶ First published in French in 1980, François Hartog's famous monograph, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of Other in the Writing of History*, explores the idea that Herodotus applies a "rhetoric of otherness" to the Scythian ethnography outlined in

⁶² Said (1978) 204-205.

⁶³ For discussion of structuralism's impact on Classics, see Almagor and Skinner (2013) 3-4.

⁶⁴ Lloyd (1966) 7, 31, 65-67.

⁶⁵ Cartledge (1993) 11-13, 16, 38-39. For some analogous judgements, see Vidal-Naquet (1986) 2-10.

⁶⁶ E. Hall (1989) 1-5.

book four of the *Histories*. This rhetoric invents a cultural inversion between the Scythians and the Athenian Greeks. Detailed information about Scythia is subordinate to an overarching, stereotypical portrait that is purposely crafted to present the Scythians as diametric opposites of the Athenians. The Athenians are politically cognisant, moral citizens in the most Greek of all Greek *poleis*. The Scythians are savage, nomadic pastoralists who live removed from civilisation. Herodotus, though, simultaneously turns the Athenian-Scythian inversion on its head by delineating some of the similarities between the Scythian Other and the Athenian Self.⁶⁷

As much as Hartog, Hall and Cartledge have brought the concept of the Other into the mainstream of thinking about ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition, it is Said's *Orientalism* that underpins the whole field of inquiry. P. Vasunia highlights the unparalleled impact of *Orientalism*:

It should be said, moreover, that the Greek-barbarian antithesis has been an enduring concern of Hellenists since long before the publication of *Orientalism*, a concern that dates back at least to Julius Jüthner's *Hellenen und Barbaren* of 1923 and Walther Kranz's *Stasimon* of 1933. Some Hellenists have even claimed that Said's book was anticipated in large part by Arnaldo Momigliano's *Alien Wisdom*, which was first published in 1975 but based on lectures delivered a few years earlier. Whatever the merits of this claim, we can see that Said gave the issue of Greeks and barbarians an interpretative framework and depth that it had hitherto lacked, and assuredly no Hellenist treated the issue with the same commanding sweep and range of texts and materials as Said did in *Orientalism*.⁶⁸

The suggestion that the Orient of modern colonial vernacular had its roots in classical antiquity implies that the ancient Greeks characterised the non-Greek inhabitants of

⁶⁷ Hartog (1988) 10-11, 193-194, 210-215; cf. Hartog (2001) 79-97. Hartog's thesis is situated within a wider debate about Herodotus' reliability, accuracy and use of sources. Some scholars believe Herodotus to fall seriously short of his usual epithet the "Father of History" and have instead labelled him the "Father of Lies": see Armayor (1978) 1-9; Fehling (1989) 9-11; Bichler (2001). For criticism of the "liar" school of thought, see Pritchett (1993); Vlassopoulos (2013) 50; for analysis of Hartog's impact on the study of ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition, see Almagor and Skinner (2013) 3-4; Vlassopoulos (2013) 49.

⁶⁸ Vasunia (2003) 89; for further discussion of *Orientalism* and its impact on subsequent scholarship, see Said (1985) 14-27; (1993) xi-xxv; MacKenzie (1995) 1-19; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 47, 102-103; Macfie (2000) 6; Munn (2006) 6, 180, 233.

Asia and the Near East as comprising a distinctively Oriental and monolithic cultural block. Constructing an Orient meant conveniently playing down ethno-cultural diversity. Commonly cited as evidence is the Greeks' use of the noun Μῆδος ("Mede") to encompass not only the people of Media (northwest Iran), but also the Persians and all the inhabitants of the Achaemenid Persian Empire (Hdt. 5.77.3; Ar. *Eq.* 478; *Peace*, 107-108; *Vesp.* 1098). Greek collaboration with the empire or adoption of its customs is termed Μηδισμός ("Medising") in the sources (Hdt. 8.144.1).⁶⁹ Additionally, the noun and adjective Ἀσιανός ("Asian, Asiatic") is sometimes utilised to compact Asia's mixture of cultures under one heading (Timoth. *Pers.* F 791, *ap. P Berol.* 9875 = Campbell).⁷⁰ Complicating the issue though, there are numerous examples where distinctions between specific ethno-cultural groups are preferred over or used in combination with catchall terms, such as Μῆδος and Ἀσιανός. The theory of ancient Greek Orientalism also implies that the Greeks derogatorily depicted the inhabitants of the Near East and Asia as their cultural inferiors, using idiosyncratic Oriental stereotypes. Such a view affords little room for neutral or favourable representations to coexist with the pejorative. Rosaria Munson takes a slightly different stance. She asserts that although the ascription of Orientalism to ancient Greek texts has sometimes lacked subtlety, it is still valid in instances where the dominant position is not disparaging of non-Greeks. Orientalism is about compartmentalising a cultural type – it is often derisive in nature, but that is not a prerequisite.⁷¹

Of all ancient Greek sources, Aeschylus' *Persians* has been most frequently associated with Orientalism. Said considered it to be a cornerstone of ancient Greek Orientalism. The play, produced in 472 BC shortly after Greek victory over the Persian

⁶⁹ See LSJ (1940) s.v. Μῆδος, Μηδίζω: 1125. Tuplin (1996) 141 argues that for the most part the Greeks understood the Achaemenid Empire to be a Persian one and would speak in these terms when talking about individual Persians or the institutions and customs of the Achaemenid world. "Mede" was not used interchangeably with "Persian"; instead, it was largely reserved for contexts in which the focus was on the collective mass of an Oriental power threatening the Greek world – hence why Herodotus' *Histories* were known as τὰ Μηδικά; cf. Cartledge (1993) 46. There are other scholars who contend that the application of Μῆδος to the Persians and their empire was non-pejorative and reflected either a genuine misunderstanding of Persian ethnicity: see Georges (1994) 49; or a recognition of the initial close ties between Median and Persian cultures during the reign of Cyrus the Great (c. 559 – 530 BC): see Graf (1984) 15-30; E. Hall (1989) 56; Munson (2009) 460. It is important to note that the Persians referred to the Greeks by the term *Yauna* ("Ionian"), which seems to have elided them with other peoples of the empire's western frontier, such as the Lydians: see E. Hall (1989) 78; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001) 323-346; J. M. Hall (2002) 70-71; Cawkwell (2005) 1; Crielaard (2009) 42-43; Kim (2009) 26-29; (2013) 33; Miller (2013) 21-22.

⁷⁰ See LSJ (1940) s.v. Ἀσία: 256.

⁷¹ Munson (2005) 58-63; for further support of Said's hypothesis of ancient Greek Orientalism, see esp. E. Hall (1989) 73, 99, 101-102; Coleman (1997) 188; Mitchell (2007) 113-114; Kim (2009) 10.

invaders, is set amidst the reaction in the Persian capital Susa to news of the Persian fleet's annihilation at the Battle of Salamis. Said argued that the *Persians* constructs an Orient which is comprised by all the barbarian peoples under the dominion of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, whom the Greeks defeated and forced to retreat back to Asia. The Orient is situated in military and cultural conflict with Europe, home of the Greeks. Europe, powerful and articulate, invents an Orient that is comprehensively defeated and distant, emotionally saturated by experiences of emptiness, loss and disaster (Aesch. *Pers.* 11, 41, 57, 548-549, 718).⁷² Edith Hall agrees with Said's assessment:

The tragedy is not ornamented by oriental colouring but suffused by it, indeed it represents the first unmistakable file in the archive of Orientalism, the discourse by which the European imagination has dominated Asia ever since by conceptualizing its inhabitants as defeated, luxurious, emotional, cruel, and always as dangerous...The language in which the *Persae* expresses its Orientalism is a daring result of the poets' search in the years during and after the Persian Wars for a new literary language in which to imply the ascendancy of Hellas and express the "otherness" of the invader.⁷³

Thomas Harrison, in his book *The Emptiness of Asia: Aeschylus' Persians and the History of the Fifth Century* (2000), sees the tragedy differently. He views the *Persians* as a patriotic, Athenocentric acclamation of Greek military triumph that xenophobically indicts the Persian Empire.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, he opposes the association of Aeschylus' anti-Persian prejudices with Orientalism, as it seems disingenuous to assume an unbroken line of inheritance between ancient and modern chauvinism:

Because the Greeks were the first to write in terms of such binary oppositions, we may be in danger of exaggerating their responsibility for the later pervasiveness of such ideas, of fitting the Greeks too easily into a

⁷² Said (1978) 56-57.

⁷³ E. Hall (1989) 99-100; cf. Georges (1994) xv, who states that Said "was altogether correct to place the *Persae* at the beginning of his account of the West's vision of the Asiatic as sensual, irrational, effeminate, cruel, and weak – in short, servile by nature"; Turner (2001) 41; Papadodima (2014) 263.

⁷⁴ Harrison (2000b) 51-52, 61-65 points out that his interpretation of the play is shaped by the historical circumstances of its production during the Delian League's expansion in the Aegean in the 470s. The celebration of Athenian exploits at Salamis justifies Athenian militarism at the head of the Delian League.

modern model. The Greeks were, after all – at least in their own estimation – the underdogs in their clash with Asia. Not all barbarians came from the East. The assumption of a continuous tradition of the Orient – and a corresponding idea of Europe – may indeed play into the hands of those who ascribe very different values to the East and West, who believe (with Gilbert Murray) that “with all its faults and vulgarities, and with all that it has still to learn from certain Eastern nations” the Western community “is nevertheless, in virtue of its Hellenic and Christian heritage, called upon to lead the world.”⁷⁵

Harrison’s interpretation of the *Persians* is in sync with the developing body of literature in Classics that is rethinking the legacy provided to the West by ancient Greece. The literature suggests that the theory of ancient Greek Orientalism has been widely accepted due to a fundamental overemphasis on the ideological continuities between ancient Greece and the modern West.⁷⁶

Modern historiography of the ancient Near East and Achaemenid Persia in general supports the retrojection of Orientalism onto the ancient Greeks. During the 1980s the University of Groningen hosted annual “Achaemenid History Workshops,” co-ordinated by preeminent scholars in the field Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Amélie Kuhrt. Throughout the published conference proceedings an important theme recurs – that the vast majority of our information about the ancient Near East and Asia derives from partisan Greek sources that produce inaccurate impressions of the region’s inhabitants. Many scholars participating in the “Achaemenid History Workshops” equate with Orientalism ancient Greek portrayals of the peoples of the Near East and Asia as uniformly slavish, soft, immoral and decadent. Moreover, they recognise a need to balance the image of the Orient painted in the Greek sources with analysis of the highly fragmentary Near Eastern and Achaemenid primary source material. Aeschylus, Herodotus, and Ctesias of Cnidus (*fl.* late 5th to early 4th cent. BC) are three figures commonly labelled as Orientalist, with Ctesias thought to be the most vociferous among them. Ctesias lived for several years as a physician at the court of Artaxerxes II (r. 404 –

⁷⁵ Harrison (2000b) 42.

⁷⁶ See e.g. Vlassopoulos (2007b) 1-4, 6-7, 101-104; Gruen (2011b) 1-2; Rollinger (2014) 231-233; Tziovas (2014) 3 notes that while modern Greece is usually considered to lie outside the West, it is also perceived in the Western imagination as a place of origins – the West has intellectually colonised Greece’s classical past.

359 BC), and wrote a historical account of Assyria and Persia, entitled *Persica*. An alleged example of Orientalism is found in a fragment of this work, which describes the Assyrian king Ninyas: (Ctesias, *Persica*, F 1n, *ap.* Ath. 12.528e-f = Llewellyn-Jones and Robson):

Κτησίᾱς ἐν τρίτῃ Περσικῶν καὶ πάντας μὲν φησι τοὺς
βασιλεύσαντας τῆς Ἀσίας περὶ τρυφὴν σπουδάσαι, μάλιστα δὲ
Νίνυαν τὸν Νίνου καὶ Σεμιράμιδος υἱόν. καὶ οὗτος οὖν ἔνδον μένων
καὶ τρυφῶν ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ἑωρᾶτο εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ τῶν εὐνούχων καὶ τῶν
ἰδίων γυναικῶν.

In the third book of his *Persica*, Ctesias says that all those who ruled over Asia were eager to live in luxury, and especially Ninyas, son of Ninus and Semiramis. This man then staying indoors and living in luxury was never seen by anyone except by his own eunuchs and wives.⁷⁷

Ninyas' indulgences in affluence, eunuchs and women place him in the same precarious company as numerous other Asiatic rulers whom Greek writers pigeonhole as effeminate and hedonistic. Sancisi-Weerdenburg argues that this Orientalist colouring has perverted the perception of Asiatic civilisations in classical scholarship. She criticises Ctesias in particular for propagating a myth that the Persian Empire had fallen into decadence and decay following its defeat in the Persian Wars.⁷⁸

In *Writing Ancient Persia* (2011), Harrison critiques the historiography of the ancient Near East and Achaemenid Persia. He asserts that the field of inquiry is imprisoned by the modern preconception of an East-West divide, overstating the intersection between ancient Greek ethnocentrism and modern colonialist Orientalism. The perceived intersection has been used to cast doubt on the accuracy of ancient Greek

⁷⁷ *Persica* was the name for the genre of ancient Greek historical monographs written about Persian history and culture. The genre flourished during the fifth and fourth centuries BC. *Persica* were written by Dionysius of Miletus, Charon of Lampsacus, Hellanicus of Mytilene, Dinon of Colophon, and Ctesias. These works were an important medium for the exploration of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities: see Stevenson (1997); Lenfant (2007) 200-209; Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010) 55; Skinner (2012) 32-34.

⁷⁸ For some of the most important contributions to the "Achaemenid History Workshops" vis-à-vis ancient Greek Orientalism, see Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987a) xi-xiv; (1987b) 33-45; (1987c) 117-131. Similar impressions of ancient Greek Orientalism are articulated in a host of other works dedicated to the historiography of the Achaemenid Persian Empire: see Armayor (1978) 1-9; Kuhrt (1995) 648; Briant (2002a) 7-8; (2002b) 193-210; Brosius (2006) 3; Kuhrt (2007) 1-7.

portrayals of the Near East and Asia. According to Harrison, the rapidly expanding corpus of literature on the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity provides a more astute and profitable approach to the issue of Orientalism. The fundamental trend in many of the most recent works is to highlight the complexity in ancient Greek attitudes toward non-Greeks – these attitudes are diverse, not always informed by homogenising stereotypes, and not always pejorative.⁷⁹ In *The Invention of Greek Ethnography*, Skinner makes a similar argument. He believes that it is invalid to categorise ancient Greek depictions of Lydian and Persian opulence as Orientalist, since the characterisation had a basis in the material culture of each civilisation. Skinner points out that even if the Greeks conceptualised an Asiatic cultural type, any equation with Orientalist discourse merges ancient and modern thought patterns without properly accounting for the obvious and important changes in historical and cultural context:

While both Said's Orientalism and the "Occidental" viewpoint it implies are often ascribed an almost timeless quality, they are in fact the product of a particular set of structures and institutions and thus historically situated phenomena, with at best limited bearing on archaic and early classical Greece.⁸⁰

In regard to Ctesias, a school of thought has recently emerged which disputes the characterisation of his *Persica* as a prototype of modern colonialist Orientalism. D. Lenfant notes that the work is highly fragmentary and preserved in an altered form by Plutarch, Athenaeus and Photius in particular. These much later writers removed a number of the ethnographic descriptions from their original context, and thereby placed greater emphasis on the theme of Asiatic barbarism than Ctesias himself originally intended.⁸¹ L. Llewellyn-Jones and J. Robson argue that Ctesias' portrait of the Persian Empire differs from the reality in some aspects, reliant as it is on an outside-looking-in perspective on a foreign culture. Despite this perspective, the *Persica* presents a nuanced sketch of non-Greek cultures that is inconsistent with the concept of a

⁷⁹ Harrison (2011b) 116-123.

⁸⁰ Skinner (2012) 93; cf. esp. Irwin (2006) 6-17; Varisco (2007) 65: "As there was no full-blown Orient in the Greek psyche, there could hardly be the subversive ontological fetus of hegemonic Orientalism"; Vlassopoulos (2007b) 1-4, 6-7, 101-104; Gruen (2011b) 1-2; Almagor and Skinner (2013) 4-6; Rollinger (2014) 231-233.

⁸¹ Lenfant (2007) 205-206; for the same assertions about the integrity of Ctesias' extant material, see Bigwood (1978) 19-41; (1989) 302-316.

barbarian Orient. Ctesias details the extraordinary diversity of the peoples and cultures in Asia, conveying to his audience what he considers to be the most fascinating tales about the civilisations of Assyria and Achaemenid Persia.⁸²

The tide is presently beginning to turn, with an increasing number of publications now questioning the use of modern identity constructs, such as the Other and Orient, to make sense of ancient Greek views of non-Greeks. The position taken by both Thucydides and Isocrates, that Greekness could be learnt through education, problematises the thesis of a rigid Greek Self versus barbarian Other dichotomy (Thuc. 1.6.1-6; Isoc. *Paneg.* 50). So too does the cultural relativist perspective, which Herodotus integrates into his historical narrative. Ethnography is prominent throughout the narrative, with emphasis placed on the universal aspects of human experience that connect an otherwise diverse *oikoumene*, and on the value of attempting to understand the characteristics of each ethno-cultural group from their own point of view (Hdt. 2.158.5, 3.38.1-4).⁸³ The primary source material expresses an eclectic gamut of views about the relationship between Greeks and barbarians. In two of the principal vehicles for ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition – Athenian drama and vase painting – attitudes toward non-Greeks range from flagrant demonisation to respectful appreciation.⁸⁴ Rosalind Thomas therefore argues that more nuanced interpretations of Greek and barbarian as categories of identification – detached from the Self versus Other binary – need to be further pursued in Classics:

We should not underestimate the complexities of an ethnic characterization, even in cases where polar opposites are evidently in play. At times the modern method of bipolar analysis, while following the Greeks' own love of polar antithesis, can have curious effects.⁸⁵

⁸² Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010) 25-26, 82-84.

⁸³ For some detailed discussions of Herodotus' subversion of Greek-barbarian polarity, see Baldry (1965) 4-5, 16-19; Lateiner (1989) 141, 152; Thomas (2000) 4, 14-16, 28-29, 44-45; Munson (2001) 3-8; Thomas (2001) 228; Munson (2005) 1-6, 10, 14; Flower (2006) 275; Gruen (2006) 296; Harrison (2007) 55; Price and Thonemann (2010) 117; Vlassopoulos (2013) 49-56; Munson (2014) 352.

⁸⁴ On the complexities of Greek and barbarian as categories of identification in ancient Greek drama, see Bacon (1961) 4, 88-89, 144-152; Long (1986) 13-14; Saïd (2002) 63-65; Papadodima (2010) 41-42. On the same in Greek vase painting, see Bérard (2000) 394, 408-409; De Vries (2000) 363; Tsiafakis (2000) 364-366; Turner (2001) 27-28, 40-41; J. M. Hall (2002) 176-179, 187-189; Lissarrague (2002) 101-102; Mitchell (2006) 217-223; Shapiro (2009) 57-58; Miller (2011) 123-125; Papadodima (2014) 256-262.

⁸⁵ Thomas (2001) 213-214; see also Malkin (2001) 12-13; Harrison (2002) 2, 4-7; Mitchell (2007) 25-29, 123-126; Skinner (2012) 152.

Erich Gruen's *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (2011) offers an alternative to the emphasis traditionally placed on the inflexible concepts of the Other and othering in scholarly analyses of ancient Greek, Roman and Jewish ethno-cultural identity construction. Gruen believes that ancient perceptions of cultural antithesis and inferiority were elastic, matched sometimes in the same breath by perceptions of sameness and inclusion:

The expression of collective character in antiquity, so it is here argued, owes less to insisting on distinctiveness from the alien than to postulating links with, adaptation to, and even incorporation of the alien.⁸⁶

In regard to the ancient Greeks, he identifies various instances in the primary sources where it is invalid to label the barbarians depicted as Others. Several passages in Aeschylus' *Persians* resist a straightforward polarisation of Greek Self and barbarian Other; instead, evoking sympathy for the Persian enemy. Moreover, in the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon portrays Persian royal character and institutions in a largely favourable light.⁸⁷ Gruen's work is important because it draws much needed attention to the subtler intricacies of Greek ethno-cultural self-definition, and points out the gulf that separates the ancient Greek concept of barbarian from the modern Other.

The grip that the concepts of the Other and the Orient have on the study of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities has prompted a broader conversation in Classics about the prevalent Eurocentric approach to writing ancient Greek history. In *Unthinking the Greek Polis: Ancient Greek History Beyond Eurocentrism* (2007), Kostas Vlassopoulos contends that traditional Western accounts of ancient Greek history are steered by Eurocentric viewpoints. Ever since the notion of European/Western civilisation was invented in the context of European colonialism, the history books have traced its ultimate foundations back to ancient Greece and Rome. The Greeks and Romans are compartmentalised, their world and cultures conceptually sectioned off from the ancient Near East and Mediterranean. This compartmentalisation accords with the prevailing dogma that there exist metaphysical entities in world history

⁸⁶ Gruen (2011b) 352. Kim (2009) 2 asserts that ancient Greek representations of barbarians range from positive to negative and everything in-between. The negative representations are less about a conviction of Greek superiority than they are about an anxiety of succumbing to foreign invasion and ultimately absorption.

⁸⁷ Gruen (2011b) 20, 35, 53-56.

– the Orient and Occident, East and West – which have a genealogy. Accordingly, there is a pattern of events in human history which has led to the genesis of the modern West, rooted in the values of individual liberty and democracy derived historically from the Greek *polis*.⁸⁸ A corollary of this dogma is the Orientalist jingoism found scattered throughout some European and North American scholarship. Historians, such as Anthony Pagden, have asserted that the Persian Wars should be considered the formative moment in the history of the West. The conflict, they insist, established an ideological fault line and perpetual antagonism between peoples of the East and West, which is still with us today, exhibited in the terror perpetrated by Islamic Jihadism against the United States and its allies.⁸⁹ The extremists in the military group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant have appropriated the Orientalist ideology of an inherent antipathy between East and West for their own ends, portraying the West as the historical aggressor and oppressor in an attempt to vindicate recent violent acts of retaliation.

Vlassopoulos disagrees with the version of history which views the Persian Wars as initiating a polarisation of East and West; he suggests that it ignores the cultural discontinuities between ancient Greece and the modern West.⁹⁰ A. Adib-Moghaddam shares Vlassopoulos' concerns, determining that the theory of a millennia old and ongoing clash of civilisations is retroactive and creates deceptive binaries. The parochial conflict between Persia and Greek city-states in the fifth century BC, he states, “has been turned into an artificial cultural and civilizational marker between East and West.”⁹¹ The clash of civilisations hypothesis conflicts with research that extricates the ancient Greeks from their predetermined destiny by giving greater priority to what they adopted and adapted from non-Greek cultures, than to the examples of their ethnocentrism and xenophobia. Such research unveils the positive and inclusive side of ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition, and situates the Greeks within an eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultural *koine*, irreconcilable with an East-West

⁸⁸ Vlassopoulos (2007b) 1-4, 67, 101-104.

⁸⁹ Pagden (2008) x-xi; see also Grote (1906) 265, 791-792; Murray (1954); B. Lewis (1964); (1993); Green (1996) 3-10; Huntington (1996); Freeman (1999) 171-172, 184-185; Hanson (2002) 4, 19; B. Lewis (2002); Raaflaub (2004) 56, 86. For the related hypothesis that peoples of the East and West perceive and reason differently from one another, using disparate systems of thought, see Nisbett (2003).

⁹⁰ Vlassopoulos (2007b) 1-4, 67, 101-104; cf. Harrison (2011b) 123-126.

⁹¹ Adib-Moghaddam (2011) 40-41; see also Gallant (2006) 122-124; Lianeri (2007) 333-337.

antithesis.⁹² As Vasunia points out, however, the East-West antithesis still dominates the field of ancient Greek cultural history:

If Said's work presents the East-West distinction as the problematic and phantasmatic retrojection of a modern European tradition, this is a distinction that Hellenists have perpetuated implicitly or explicitly in their writings. Thus, despite the scholarship of Martin Bernal, Walter Burkert, and Martin West, among others, the interconnectedness of Greece with Egypt and the Near East is often ignored or marginalized. Sometimes, this neglect appears as a disregard for non-Greek sources, or inversely, as an unquestioning acceptance of Greek sources that pertain to the non-Greek world; at other times, such neglect blinds modern readers to the socio-political investment of the ancient Greeks in these texts. In this sense, the scholarly failure to situate Greek culture within the much larger context of the eastern Mediterranean and West Asia finds a parallel in European Philhellenism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁹³

The evidence for the hybridity of ancient Greek culture is ample, compromising the theory of a linear historical and cultural progression from ancient Greece to modern West, and of a perpetual antagonism between East and West. Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afro-Asiatic Roots of Western Civilization* (1987-91) has generated significant debate with its claim that the origins of Greek civilisation are to be found in Egyptian and Semitic colonisation of the Balkans during the second millennium BC. Even though other scholars have identified some significant problems with this theory, Bernal has initiated a meaningful conversation about the cultural interconnections between ancient Greece and the Near East.⁹⁴ Martin West, Walter Burkert, Margaret Miller and Ann Gunter are four of the most notable authors who have since investigated how the cultural interface between ancient Egypt, the Levant, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Persia and Greece impacted the development of Greek myth, literature, art, science and philosophy. The Greek alphabet's derivation from Phoenician script is a prime example

⁹² For discussion, see Vlassopoulous (2007a) 94; Almagor and Skinner (2013) 4.

⁹³ Vasunia (2003) 90.

⁹⁴ Bernal (1987-91, vol. 1) 1-2. Responses to Bernal are too many to cite here, but see esp. E. Hall (1996) 333-348.

of the ancient Greeks' cultural ties with Near Eastern peoples.⁹⁵ In *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century BC: A Study in Cultural Receptivity* (1997), Margaret Miller specifically focuses on the integration of Achaemenid Persian material culture into Athenian society. She shows that the Athenian reaction to Persia was highly complex. While rhetoric and official propaganda could be acutely pejorative, the archaeological material reveals a degree of receptivity to Persian culture. The Athenians assimilated aspects of Persian material culture – art, luxury items and dress – into their own culture.⁹⁶

Although a momentum shift is under way, the premise that Greece and the Orient existed in antiquity as discrete, static cultural entities is still well established. This premise disregards not only the hybridity of ancient Greek culture, but also its multiplicity. In *The Cultures Within Ancient Greek Culture: Contact, Conflict, Collaboration* (2003), edited by Carol Dougherty and Leslie Kurke, there are a number of essays which highlight the permeability of cultural boundaries between Greeks and non-Greeks. A factor in this permeability was the Greeks' own diverse array of ethno-cultural identities. These identities, ranging from the local/*polis* to the collective Greek, were in constant flux, simultaneously competing and collaborating with one another.⁹⁷ Greeks hailing from different city-states referred to each other as ξενοί, denoting either welcomed “guest friends” bound by the principles of reciprocal hospitality or “strangers” and “outsiders,” who were not members of the host political community. The Spartans were distinctly isolationist describing all non-Spartans, whether Greek or barbarian, as ξενοί. Other Greeks usually made a more nuanced distinction between Greek ξενοί and non-Greek βάρβαροι (Hdt. 9.11.2-3, 9.55.2).⁹⁸ The evidence for ancient Greek ethno-cultural diversity undermines the Eurocentric view of ancient Greece as an exceptional and homogeneous predecessor to the modern West.

⁹⁵ On the cultural interconnectedness between ancient Greece and the Near East, see esp. Astour (1967); West (1971); Boardman (1980); Burkert (1992); West (1997); Dowden (2001); Burkert (2004); Vlassopoulos (2007a); Gunter (2009).

⁹⁶ Miller (1997) 1-28, 243; on the Ionians' assimilation of Persian culture, see Miller (2013) 19-26.

⁹⁷ Dougherty and Kurke (2003) 1-6.

⁹⁸ LSJ (1940) s.v. ξένος: 1189; Cartledge (1993) 47-49; Alonso-Núñez (2003) 148; Munson (2005) 18; Skinner (2012) 250.

Conclusion

The final section of the chapter has provided insight into the far-reaching impact had by modern theoretical paradigms on the study of ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. The concepts of the Other and Orient have long encoded the way classicists think about the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity, and the ancient Greeks' place and legacy in world history. The preceding analysis has shown that efforts to disconnect ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition from modern thought patterns are comparatively scarce and worth pursuing in greater detail. That is not to say that the Other and Orient are completely irrelevant, but their validity across the broad spectrum of ancient Greek approaches to ethno-cultural identity is limited.

The issue of alterity remains front of mind in the next chapter, which begins the thesis' evaluation of geography's role in the construction of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities. The concept of the Other has become a trope within the scholarship examining how the ancient Greeks perceived the geographic and ethnographic structure of the *oikoumene*. The socio-cultural significance of the Greeks' own self-positioning is a matter for debate, as it is widely held that they conceived of a culturally hierarchical centre versus periphery binary, which located the Greek Self in the centre of the *oikoumene* and the barbarian Other around the periphery.

The Theory of Ancient Greek Geographical Ethnocentrism: Locating *Hellas* and the Mediterranean Sea within the Conceptual Structure of the *Oikoumene*

This chapter initiates my examination of how the ancient Greeks integrated geographical concepts into the construction of their ethno-cultural identities. Leading into his discussion of ancient Greek Orientalism, Said explained that a notion of shared territory is commonly an important part of an ethno-cultural group's self-definition, and differentiation from Others:

A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings and the territory beyond, which they call "the land of the barbarians." In other words, this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours" which is "theirs" is a way of making geographical distinctions that *can be* entirely arbitrary. I use the word "arbitrary" here because imaginative geography of the "our land-barbarian land" variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for "us" to set up boundaries in our own minds; "they" become "they" accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from "ours"...The geographic boundaries accompany the social, ethnic, and cultural ones in expected ways. Yet often the sense in which someone feels himself to be not-foreign is based on a very unrigorous idea of what is "out there," beyond one's own territory. All kinds of suppositions, associations, and fictions appear to crowd the unfamiliar space outside one's own.¹

The primary source material indicates that the distinction between Greek land and barbarian land was far more of a grey area than Said alleged. Greek *poleis* were independent political communities separated from one another by geographical boundaries. The Greeks, moreover, were a mobile people, their history littered with

¹ Said (1978) 54; cf. Brotton (2012) 4, who asserts that human communities distinguish and define themselves spatially in relation to the world "out there."

stories of communal displacement, mass migration, and colonisation throughout the Mediterranean. With Greeks constantly on the move and settled widely throughout the *oikoumene*, from the eastern Euxine to the western Mediterranean, the conceptualisation of panhellenic territory was convoluted and unconventional.² The concept of *Hellas* was abstract, designating an imagined Greek culture space that was geographically fragmented and fluid, different from a tangible and contiguous territory with demarcated boundaries. The wide scope of *Hellas* meant that collective Greek identity was territorialised in complex relation to some of the most expansive geographical spaces in the *oikoumene*, the continents and the Mediterranean Sea. Persuaded by the modern philosophical and anthropological concept of alterity, there is a consensus among many that the ancient Greeks routinely used a hypothesis of geographical ethnocentrism to locate themselves geographically and culturally in the *oikoumene* – the Greek Self occupied the civilised Mediterranean centre while barbarian Others occupied the distant regions and continental interiors of the heathen periphery. The first section of this chapter explores the ancient Greek interest in and approach to geography. It addresses the perceived geographic and ethnographic composition of the *oikoumene*, the nucleal conceptual structure of ancient Greek geography. The second section investigates the areas of the *oikoumene* with which the Greeks associated themselves as an ethno-cultural community. The Greeks' own sense of place in relation to the Mediterranean Sea receives detailed consideration. The final section explains the wider socio-cultural significance of the Greeks' self-positioning, analysing and critiquing the theory of a prevalent ancient Greek geographical ethnocentrism.

The *Oikoumene* in Ancient Greek Geography

It is a basic principle of human understanding to engage in geographical thought and impose some kind of order and structure upon the space of the known world.³ The ancient Greeks' procurement of geographical knowledge relied upon various channels of information transmission – exploration, military conquest, migration, hearsay and folklore tradition. The earliest evidence for geographic inquiry is found in Homer's

² For discussion of how the Greeks' geographic fragmentation and mobility influenced their perception of communal territory, see Finley (1954) 255-256; Gould (1989) 5; Malkin (1998) 18; Braudel (2001) 228; J. M. Hall (2001) 166; Malkin (2001) 14; Saïd (2001) 275; Thomas (2001) 215; Barker (2010) 2; Malkin (2011) 206; Kaplan (2014) 305-307. For a comprehensive analysis of Greek mobility, see Garland (2014).

³ Brotton (2012) 1.

epics (Hom. *Il.* 2.494-759, 18.606-607; *Od.* 1.22-24). In antiquity, the description and depiction of whole world space was a creative art form, more than it was an empirical science. As J. S. Romm notes, nothing existed in pre-modern societies like the all-encompassing satellite image of the earth that we have at our disposal today to structure our perceptions of world geography:

We who have seen the whole earth, either as represented on maps and globes or as reproduced in satellite photographs, find it difficult to adopt the perspective of those who have not. The image of a floating blue and green sphere, with sharply defined oceans and continents, has been so thoroughly assimilated into our mind's eye as to become intuitive. However, the great majority of mankind has lived and died without ever glimpsing this image, and even today, many isolated races remain innocent of it. For such peoples, mind must take the place of maps in giving shape and structure to the inhabited earth; where empirical data give out they employ any other means available – theory, myth, and fantasy – to define and depict the space in which they dwell.⁴

The entire earth has now been explored, conquered and mapped; however, only a small portion of it was known to the ancient Greeks. The parts of the earth that the Greeks “knew” were familiarised by way of occasional eye-witness reports and an abundance of derivative, piecemeal information diffused along networks of trade and exchange. The Greeks transmitted their geographical knowledge in literary and cartographic formats. Both formats were subjective in content, selecting and arranging information in an ad hoc manner. In the late twentieth century, historians of geography and cartography began moving away from the idea that both textual geographic descriptions and maps are neutral and transparent purveyors of information. It is now widely accepted that the geographer/cartographer decides how the space is rendered; the reader/viewer decides how it is interpreted; and both are guided by societal attitudes and ideologies.⁵

⁴ Romm (1992) 9.

⁵ For discussion, see esp. Harley (1987) 1-42; Turnbull (1993) 15, 50; Jacob (1996) 191-198; Edson (1999) vii-x; Wilford (2002) 15; Brotton (2012) 6-7.

There is evidence that some of the earliest extensive investigations into world geography were undertaken in sixth-century Ionia, principally at the port of Miletus. This *polis* on the western coast of Anatolia, near the mouth of the river Maeander, was sited favourably for the absorption of geographic knowledge. As part of Ionia, Miletus lay near the crossroads between Europe and Asia and at a nexus of important land and maritime trade routes connecting the Aegean, Mediterranean, Near East and Persia. Ionian scholars were especially interested in natural philosophy. They thoroughly examined the origins and material structure of the natural world as part of the *cosmos*, while also pursuing related research into cosmology, geography, ethnography, genealogy and history. Prose writings produced in Ionia's thriving intellectual climate often combined these subject areas into a single inquiry, grouped under the broad heading of Ionian historiography.⁶ One other distinctive genre of literary work produced in Ionia was the περίπλους ("a sailing-around"), written in the manner of a ship-captain's log, and supplying information about the sequence of ports, landmarks and intervening distances encountered during exploratory coastal voyages. The *periplus* lent itself to a hodological perception of space, as sailors voyaged from port to port and documented their route in linear sequence. Hecataeus' *Periodos Ges* adopted and adapted the *periplus* format, describing the places and peoples encountered on a clockwise journey around the Mediterranean from the Pillars of Heracles (Strait of Gibraltar). The work also compiled ethnographic information about some more remote areas of the *oikoumene*, such as Scythia, Persia, and India.⁷ The Ionian historiographical tradition and the *periplus* genre were agents for the advancement of many influential ideas about the nature of the *oikoumene*, its shape, size, boundaries and inhabitants.

⁶ For analysis of the Ionian historiographical tradition and its preoccupation with questions of natural philosophy, see Jacoby (1912); (1913); Pearson (1939) 2-6, 18-28; Kahn (1960) 222; Drews (1973); Kirk, Raven and Schofield (1983) 133-142; Fornara (1983); Aujac (1987a) 130-147; Jacob (1996) 191-198; Clarke (1999) 10, 59-65; Jacob (1999) 27-29; Dueck (2000) 155-156; Hahn (2001) 177-218; Greaves (2002) 10-13; Munn (2006) 178-220; Brotton (2012) 22; Dueck (2012) 4-8; Irby (2012) 88-91; Skinner (2012) 18-19.

⁷ One notable example of an ancient Greek *periplus* is the *Massaliote Periplus*. It dates from the sixth century BC (preserved in the Roman poet Avienus' extant *Ora Maritima*) and details a voyage along western Mediterranean and North Atlantic coastlines. Also, the *Periplus of Pseudo-Scylax* (Shipley's 2011 edition of the text is the most recent) describes a voyage around the entire Mediterranean Sea. It dates from the mid-fourth century BC, but incorporates a lot of information from earlier itineraries. Analysis of the Greek *periplus* genre is provided by Dilke (1985) 131; Aujac (1987a) 130-147; Nicolet (1991) 58; Cordano (1992) 29; Romer (1998) 11, 21; Clarke (1999) 10, 198-206; Kaplan (1999) vi-xi; Dueck (2000) 43-45; Cole (2010) 203; Dueck (2012) 6-7, 52; Irby (2012) 88; Branscome (2013) 110. Jacob (1991) 73-84 takes the curious stance that the *periplus*, rather than being firmly rooted in accounts of sailors' voyages, was simply a literary construct examining the nature of the non-Greek "alterite"; Shipley (2011) 20-21 argues that the *periplus* was not a distinct genre of coastal exposition, but a constituent part of a wider body of geographic and ethnographic literature.

Both also contributed to the design of ancient Greek world maps. The two earliest of these, no longer extant, date from the second half of the sixth century BC, and are ascribed to the Milesian intellectuals Anaximander and Hecataeus (Strabo 1.1.11; Agathemerus, 1.1; Diog. Laert. 2.1-2).

In order to construct world maps, Greek cartographers had to think beyond the hodological plane and have a basic command of the principles of abstract space – space that is vast, uncharted by point-to-point observations, and, as such, is imagined to be homogeneous. The representation of the *oikoumene* on maps involved abstracting written geographic and ethnographic information from hodological catalogues and itineraries into a coherent two-dimensional pictorial form. These maps constructed a two-dimensional bird's-eye view of all known lands and seas, and the spatial relationships between them. Our information about ancient Greek cartography is derived solely from literary references. There is an extant cultural parallel in the “Babylonian Map of the World,” dating from c. 600 BC (see fig. 2, pg. 56).⁸ The map depicts a circular landmass bisected by the river Euphrates and with the city of Babylon positioned in the centre. Several other places are delineated on the landmass, such as Assyria, Urartu, Der and Susa. Completely surrounding the landmass is an ocean, and beyond that there are several remote outer regions. The more familiar and known a place is to the Babylonians, the closer it is to the centre of the map and vice versa. The extent to which maps circulated throughout ancient Greek society is debated, as is the extent of the Greeks' familiarity with the concept of abstract space. In his famous study *Greek and Roman Maps* (1985), O. A. W. Dilke argued that cartography and a corresponding map consciousness – the capacity to discern abstract space – were widespread among the ancient Greeks. Harley and Woodward's tome, *The History of Cartography* (1987), reiterated the point.⁹ The majority of commentators disagree, however, asserting that ancient Greek cartography was an esoteric discipline. The use and comprehension of maps was largely restricted to a section of the Greek intellectual community and ruling elite. Cartographic representation and interpretation demanded expert know-how, technical skill, and astute observation. Even among the well-educated, mapping appears not to have been a dominant mode for expressing

⁸ For some thorough analysis of the “Babylonian Map of the World,” see esp. Kahn (1960) 84; West (1971) 87, 209-213; Dilke (1985) 13; Horowitz (1988) 147-165; Hahn (2001) 202-203; Munn (2006) 194-195.

⁹ Dilke (1985); Aujac (1987a) 130-147; (1987b) 148-160; (1987c) 161-176; Dilke (1987) 105-106; Harley (1987) 1-42.

geographical thought. Greek conceptualisations of the *oikoumene* customarily relied on verbal and textual geographic descriptions, in which hodological renderings of space dwarfed the abstract.¹⁰ There are indications throughout the primary sources that the greater part of the Greek populace had a very rudimentary understanding of world geography and lacked the knowledge to think in terms of the abstract space depicted on world maps. The aptitude to picture in two dimensions the relative size, outline and configuration of the *oikoumene* paled in comparison to the cognisance of geographical space in a single dimension, defined by connected lines representing routes of travel.¹¹



Fig. 2: Babylonian Map of the World (British Museum, cuneiform tablet, Sippar, Iraq: ME 92687). Source: http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_image.aspx?image=ps319688.jpg&retpage=1 8873.

A passage from Herodotus' *Histories* alludes to the limitations on the average Greek's geographic knowledge. In book eight, Herodotus says that the island of Delos is the farthest east that mainland Greeks feel comfortable travelling. They have little idea of what lies beyond and believe that the island of Samos off the west coast of Anatolia is no nearer to them than the Pillars of Heracles at the western edge of the

¹⁰ See e.g. Hom. *Il.* 2.494-759; Hdt. 5.49.4-9, 5.52.1 – 5.53.1.

¹¹ For the argument that the abstraction of geographic space was relatively rare in ancient Greece, see Janni (1984) 24-25, 44-45, 90-95; Brodersen (1995); Clarke (1999) 9-10; Jacob (1999) 25-29; Mattern (1999) 27-29, 41; Salway (2001) 21; Harrison (2007) 44-48; Mitchell (2007) 177-185; Talbert (2008) 13-14; Barker (2010) 8; Purves (2010); Shipley (2011) 10; Brotton (2012) 3; Poiss (2014) 69-70.

Mediterranean. Herodotus' tone is sardonic and hyperbolic, but the point still stands that the average Greek could not easily comprehend the spatial relationships between places throughout the *oikoumene* (Hdt. 8.132.3). Another example of defective geography appears in Thucydides' account of the Sicilian Expedition (415 – 413 BC), when he claims that most Athenians are ignorant of Sicily's large size as an island (Thuc. 6.1.1). Plutarch tells a different story, stating that in the lead-up to the expedition, Athenian men, young and old, began drawing maps of Sicily. They plotted its shape, its position relative to Libya and Carthage, its location in the surrounding ocean, and the whereabouts of its harbours and districts (Plut. *Alc.* 17.3; *Nic.* 12.1). Some degree of embellishment is likely at play here, aimed at emphasising the Athenians' growing interest in Sicily at the time that it became a new battleground of the Peloponnesian War. Plutarch does not comment on the accuracy of the maps; however, such a large scale production of them is out of step with Thucydides' observation of the lack of basic geographic insight among the Athenian citizenry.

Other sources highlight that most normal Greeks had major problems interpreting maps, let alone designing them themselves. In Aristophanes' *Clouds* (423 BC), for instance, a student of the "Thinkery" shows a map of the world to a typical Athenian citizen, the farmer Strepsiades. The student reads the map with relative ease, identifying the locations of Athens, Euboea and Sparta. Strepsiades, in contrast, cannot recognise any of these places. He lacks awareness of how maps condense space, alarmed by how close Sparta is to Athens on the map. The comic effect lies in his request for Sparta to be moved farther away from Athens, a fretful plea at a time when the two city-states were deadlocked in the bitter conflict of the Peloponnesian War (Ar. *Nub.* 206-215). For the effect to resonate with the play's audience there had to be some truth to the Athenian citizen's struggle to fathom maps and abstract space.¹² The same misconception of abstract space arises in Herodotus' portrayal of the Ionian Revolt. He narrates an episode in which Aristagoras, tyrant of Miletus, travels to the court of Cleomenes of Sparta in an attempt to persuade the king to support the Ionians in their revolt from Persia. Aristagoras employs a map as a visual aid, hoping to incentivise

¹² Strepsiades' perspective is hodological – he sees space as a path that one travels through. Despite not understanding the nuances of cartographic representation, there is evidence to suggest that the average Greek had at least a rudimentary awareness of the location of a few noteworthy places in relation to their own native *polis*. In Ar. *Eq.* 169-174, for instance, a sausage seller in Athens is instructed to stand on a table (obviously he stands facing himself toward the north) and survey the islands all round, swivel his right eye toward Caria, and the other toward Carthage. Dan, Geus and Guckelsberger (2014) 19-20 argue

Cleomenes by drawing his attention to the different groups of peoples inhabiting the Persian Empire and to the potential spoils to be gained from war against them. The map is described as if illustrating a linear route from western Anatolia to Susa, which implies that Cleomenes has difficulty with the concept of abstract space and requires the map to be explained to him in hodological terms. The king is indignant afterwards, learning that to reach Susa it is a long three months' journey inland from the sea. From his perspective, Susa lies a much farther distance away than both the map and Aristagoras' place-to-place description had made it seem by their simplification of spatial relationships (Hdt. 5.49.4 – 5.50.3).¹³ Those Greeks who had mastered the concept of abstract space were consequently well-equipped to perceive symbolic associations in the geography of the *oikoumene*. Symbolism created socio-cultural and geopolitical meanings for the spaces that comprised the *oikoumene*, some of which related to Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. These meanings became familiar to a wide cross-section of Greek society, even if it was only a select few who were capable of thinking about them deeply, theorising and debating in public oratory and written word.

The word οἰκουμένη derives from the noun οἶκος (“house/home”), and takes its form from the feminine singular middle participle of the verb οἰκεῖν (“to live/dwell”). Initially, the participle was paired with γῆ (“earth”) to denote any area of land which was home to human habitation. Xenophanes provides the earliest extant use of this pairing when giving an explanation of solar eclipses (Xenophanes, T 41a, *ap.* Aët. 2.24.9 = Graham):

πολλοὺς εἶναι ἡλίου καὶ σελήνας κατὰ κλίματα τῆς γῆς καὶ
ἀποτομὰς καὶ ζώνας, κατὰ δέ τινα καιρὸν ἐμπίπτειν τὸν δίσκον εἰς
τινα ἀποτομὴν τῆς γῆς οὐκ οἰκουμένην ὑφ' ἡμῶν καὶ οὕτως ὥσπερ
κενεμβατοῦντα ἔκλειψιν ὑποφαίνειν.

There are many suns and moons which accord to regions, sections and zones of the earth, and at a certain time the disk falls into some section of the earth not inhabited by us, and thus, just as if treading on nothing, it creates an eclipse.

that the Athenians, due to their public and private interactions with foreign lands and peoples, knew the importance of distinguishing between and navigating in different spaces.

¹³ On Cleomenes' underestimation of the extent of the Persian Empire, see Branscome (2013) 106.

The first author known to have employed the nominalised form of the word – ἡ οἰκουμένη – is Herodotus. In the *Histories*, the Ionic dialect variant (ἡ οἰκεομένη) describes any particular “inhabited region” (Hdt. 2.32.5), and more generally the entire section of the earth that the Greeks knew to be inhabited throughout (Hdt. 3.106.1). In the fourth century BC, Xenophon uses οἰκουμένη in the restricted sense to refer to specific areas of inhabited land (Xen. *Cyr.* 4.4.5). Others, including Isocrates, Aeschines and Aristotle, utilise the broader meaning of “inhabited/known world” (Isoc. *Archidamus*, 32; Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 165; Arist. *Mete.* 362b12 – 363a1). The precise genesis of the term οἰκουμένη as “inhabited/known world” is unknown. It is possible that this meaning originated with the maps and treatises of Anaximander and Hecataeus.¹⁴ The word is absent from the surviving fragments of their works; nevertheless, Agathemerus, a Greek geographer of the third century AD, identifies the *oikoumene* as the principal subject of the Milesians’ maps (Anaximander, T 6; Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, T 12a, *ap.* Agathemerus, 1.1 = Graham):

Ἀναξίμανδρος ὁ Μιλήσιος ἀκουστῆς Θαλέω πρῶτος ἐτόλμησε τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν πίνακι γράψαι· μεθ’ ὃν Ἑκαταῖος ἀνὴρ πολυπλανὴς διηκρίβωσεν, ὥστε θαυμασθῆναι τὸ πρᾶγμα.

Anaximander the Milesian, a disciple of Thales, first dared to draw the inhabited world on a tablet; after him Hecataeus, a much-travelled man, made the map more accurate so that it became a source of wonder.

It would be easy to disregard Agathemerus’ use of οἰκουμένη as an anachronism, unrelated to the cartography of Anaximander and Hecataeus. On the other hand, the frequent usage of the word by Herodotus, who frames his discussions of the inhabited/known world as revisions of both early and contemporary Ionian geography (Hdt. 2.15.1 – 2.17.2, 4.36.2 – 4.45.5), hints at a connection between Anaximander, Hecataeus and the development of the *oikoumene* concept.

¹⁴ See Heidel (1937) 12; Munn (2006) 188-196. The evidence for Anaximander’s map and literary works is exceedingly meagre. Our knowledge about Anaximander is based mainly on testimony which emphasises the close relation between his and Hecataeus’ worldview (Anaximander, T 6 = Graham; Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, T 12a, *ap.* Agathemerus, 1.1).

Human habitation was central to the meaning of οἰκουμένη. The broadest meaning entailed a differentiation between the whole earth (ὅλος γῆ) and the part inhabited (οἰκουμένη) (Polyb. 3.37.1).¹⁵ As T. Schmitt argues, the concept of the inhabited/known world transcended physical geography, possessing socio-cultural meaning:

Accordingly, the *oikoumene* is not just a geographic entity, but first of all a social realm established by its inhabitants' ability, at least in principle, to form relationships with one another.¹⁶

By the end of the Classical period, the Greeks believed the *oikoumene* to consist of the continents Europe, Asia and Libya (Africa). Libya was sometimes deemed to be a continent in its own right, and other times it was subsumed into Asia. The *oikoumene* extended as far as Afghanistan and northwest India in the east, Ukraine and southern Russia in the north, the Iberian Peninsula and West Africa in the west, and Sudan in the south (see fig. 3, pg. 61). Its perceived composition gradually changed, as Greek geographic knowledge progressed. The *oikoumene* was divided up along numerous boundary lines, which were usually constructed to accord with natural topographical features. Boundaries compartmentalised the aggregate geographical space wherein the Greeks had observed or knew about the existence of human civilisation, and separated it from the space beyond that they considered to be unknown and uninhabited – *terra incognita*. The *oikoumene* was, thus, conceptualised on a subjective basis, reflecting a Greek point of view of the portion of the earth “which we inhabit and know” (ἥν οἰκοῦμεν καὶ γνωρίζομεν – Eratosthenes, F 33, *ap.* Strabo 1.4.6 = Roller), established by a mixture of observation (ὄψις), hearsay (ἀκοή) and opinion (γνώμη).¹⁷

¹⁵ For discussion of the meaning of οἰκουμένη as the nucleal conceptual structure of ancient Greek geography, see Gisinger (1937) s.v. *oikoumene*: 2123-2174; Heidel (1937) 12; LSJ (1940) s.v. οἰκουμένη: 1204; van Paassen (1957) 19; Georgacas (1969) 9-10; Walbank (1957-79, vol. 1) 566; Nicolet (1991) 30-48; Romm (1992) 37-41; Fowden (1993) 13-14; Berggren and Jones (2000) 58: n. 3; Dueck (2000) 43-45; Tuplin (2004) 166-168; Harris (2005) 16; Munn (2006) 188-196; Harrison (2007) 55; Roy (2007) 67; Schmitt (2007) s.v. *oikoumenē*: 73; Shcheglov (2007) 138; Cosgrove (2008) 105-106; Roller (2010) 145; Brotton (2012) 24; Dueck (2012) 4-5, 37, 84.

¹⁶ Schmitt (2007) s.v. *oikoumenē*: 73.

¹⁷ Shcheglov (2007) 138 states that “the term οἰκουμένη was never used to refer to a part of the globe that could be inhabitable *in principle*, but always to the land that is inhabited *de facto*.”

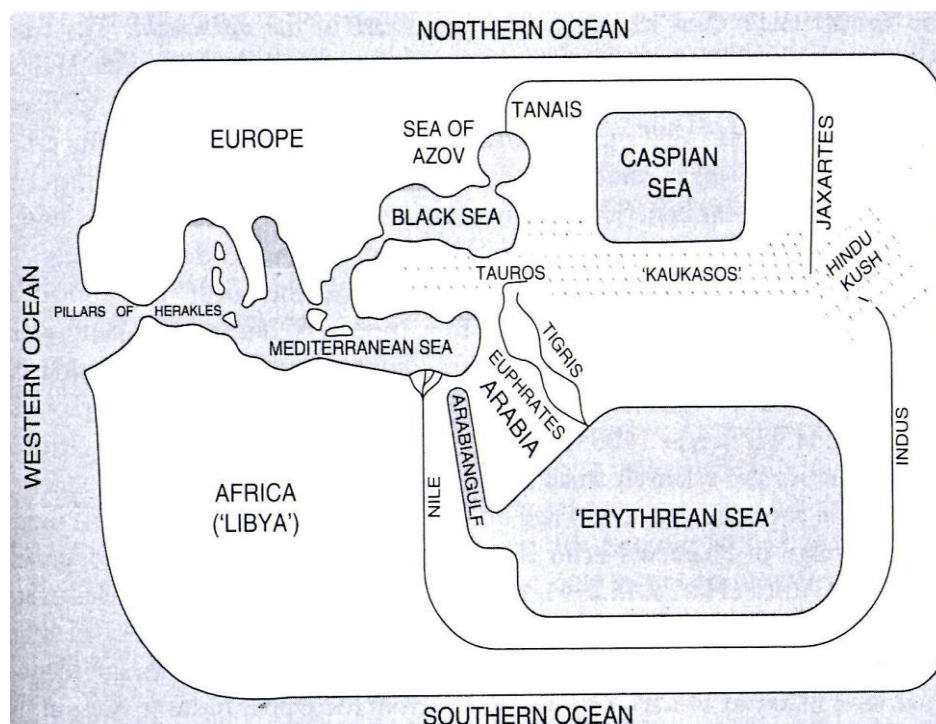


Fig. 3: “The world before Alexander”: a modern reconstruction of the Greek view of the *oikoumene* at the end of the Classical period. Source: Geus (2003) 235, fig. 14.2.

In nearly all the primary sources, οἰκουμένη specifically refers to inhabited land or the inhabited/known world. There are some notable exceptions where οἰκουμένη is applied more narrowly to an imagined space associated with the diffusion of Greek culture.¹⁸ The Athenian statesman and orator Demosthenes (384 – 322 BC), for example, employs the Hellenocentric usage during a polemic against Philip II of Macedon (Dem. *On the Halonnesus*, 35):

οὔτε τὰ ὑμέτερα ὑμῖν ἀποδώσει (αὐτοῦ γάρ φησιν εἶναι), οὔτ’ ἐν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ αἱ δωρεαὶ ἔσονται, ἵνα μὴ διαβληθῇ πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ἀλλ’ ἄλλη τις χώρα καὶ ἄλλος, ὥς ἔοικε, τόπος φανήσεται, οὗ ὑμῖν αἱ δωρεαὶ δοθήσονται.

He [Philip] will not return your [the Athenians’] possessions, for he claims them to be his own, nor will his gifts come to be *in this [Greek] part of the world*, so that he might not be slandered to the Greeks [for favouring the

¹⁸ See Harris (2005) 16; Roller (2010) 145; Broton (2012) 24.

Athenians], but some other country and foreign region, it seems, will be granted the gifts which should be assigned to you.

A contemporary Athenian orator, Lycurgus (c. 396 – 323 BC), adopts a similar perspective. He mentions Rhodian merchants “sailing around all the *oikoumene*” (πάσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην περιπλέοντες) and spreading word of the Macedonians’ victory over the Athenians at the Battle of Chaeronea (338 BC) (Lycurg. *Leoc.* 15). It is unlikely that οἰκουμένη here means inhabited/known world, unless as hyperbole. The context of Rhodian maritime mercantilism and the Battle of Chaeronea in Boeotia implies an imagined space comprised primarily of Greek city-states lying around the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean. The Hellenocentric denotation of οἰκουμένη seems to have been highly irregular, confined almost exclusively to the Attic oratory of the mid-fourth century BC, which denounced Macedonia’s aggressive expansionism. Engaged in anti-Macedonian politics and propaganda, some sections of Athens’ elite conceptually appropriated the *oikoumene* for only themselves and other Greeks. The Athenians classified the Macedonians, their new rivals for imperial power and whose Greek ethnic heritage was considered dubious, as barbarian, by grouping them with all non-Greek peoples outside the *oikoumene*.¹⁹ D. W. Roller claims that οἰκουμένη “originated in the fourth century BC to characterize the civilized (i.e. Greek) world as opposed to those not civilized (i.e. Makedonians).”²⁰ The differentiation of civilised (Greek) and uncivilised (barbarian) worlds is insinuated to some extent in the passages of Demosthenes and Lycurgus. The evidence from earlier primary sources shows, however, that it is wrong to assume a fourth-century origin for the concept of the *oikoumene*, and a primary chauvinistic meaning of “Greek/civilised world.”²¹

The *oikoumene*, in its capacity as the inhabited/known world, was the nucleal conceptual structure of ancient Greek geography. Daniela Dueck notes that the Greeks gave unexplored and uninhabited regions much less intellectual consideration than those known and inhabited lands which constituted the *oikoumene*:

¹⁹ On ancient Greek impressions of Macedonian ethnicity and culture, see Coleman (1997) 177; J. M. Hall (2001) 159-186; Worthington (2003) 70.

²⁰ Roller (2010) 145.

²¹ Geus (2011) 554 has noticed the errors in Roller’s argument, stating that the term οἰκουμένη is attested as early as Xenophanes and Herodotus, and is clearly linked with human habitation.

Unlike modern geographers, who are interested in all parts of the globe, the ancients investigated only inhabited lands. Uninhabited or desert regions were not surveyed or documented, so that they fell outside the framework of the known world. Continents other than Europe, Asia and Africa were not sought out, and in known lands the extent of knowledge grew only as a result of demographic growth and military conquest. Some attempts were made to explore unknown areas, and natural curiosity inflamed imagination. But, generally speaking, regions at the edge of the known world were considered not only dangerous and frightening but irrelevant, as empty land without human inhabitants.²²

In the primary sources, there is some theoretical speculation about the possible existence of multiple inhabited worlds. Klaus Geus contends that the Greeks evolved the concept of the *oikoumene* in association with the gradual shift from a flat-earth theory to a globe-earth theory that matured during the fifth century BC. This shift spawned the hypothesis that there could be other inhabited regions lying in the southern hemisphere.²³ In Plato's *Phaedo*, the main character Socrates posits that the *oikoumene* known to the Greeks is one of many inhabited worlds (Pl. *Phd.* 109a-b):

πάμμεγά τι εἶναι αὐτό, καὶ ἡμᾶς οἰκεῖν τοὺς μέχρι Ἑρακλείων
στηλῶν ἀπὸ Φάσιδος ἐν σμικρῷ τινι μορίῳ, ὥσπερ περὶ τέλμα
μύρμηκας ἢ βατράχους περὶ τὴν θάλατταν οἰκοῦντας, καὶ ἄλλους
ἄλλοθι πολλοὺς ἐν πολλοῖσι τοιούτοις τόποις οἰκεῖν.

I am convinced that it [the earth] is immense, and that we who dwell from the Phasis as far as the Pillars of Heracles live in a small part of it, about the sea just like ants or frogs about a pond, and that many other people live elsewhere in many such regions.

²² Dueck (2012) 4-5; see also Arnaud (2014) 44.

²³ Geus (2011) 554. Philosophical speculation about the possibility of a spherical earth can be traced back to Parmenides in the fifth century BC or perhaps even as far back as Pythagoras in the sixth century BC. Later proponents include Plato, Eudoxus (c. 410 – 355 BC) and Aristotle, all of which cite certain astronomical observations as scientific proof that the earth is spherical: see Heidel (1937) 63-102; Thomson (1948) 110-122; Dicks (1960) 23-24; Neugebauer (1975) 332-333; Keyser (2001) 362; G. Parker (2008) 52.

Aristotle, moreover, alleges that counterbalancing the *oikoumene* in the temperate zone (κλίμα) of the northern hemisphere there may be a distinct inhabited landmass in the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere (Arist. *Mete.* 362a33-35, 362b31-33). He advances a climatological model that divides the spherical earth into two polar zones, one equatorial, and two inhabited temperate zones. It is in connection with the hypothesis of multiple inhabited worlds that the common Greek geographical phrases ἡδε ἡ οἰκουμένη (“our world” – Arist. [*Mund.*] 392b26) and ἡ καθ’ ἡμᾶς οἰκουμένη γῆ (“the world that we inhabit” – Strabo 2.5.18) should be understood.

The concept of the *oikoumene* was formulated by members of the Greek intelligentsia. It provided an explanatory framework for world geography and ethnography that was accessible on a basic level to the wider Greek community. The depiction of the *oikoumene* situated the Greeks globally, delineating their spatial, socio-cultural and geopolitical relationships with one another and the rest of humanity.

The next section of this chapter analyses how the ancient Greeks conceptually positioned themselves within the *oikoumene*. It dissects the Greeks’ compartmentalisation of the lands and peoples in the inhabited/known world, a process which furnished geographical concepts, such as the Mediterranean Sea, with symbolic meanings relating to Greek ethno-cultural self-definition.

The Greeks’ Place in the *Oikoumene*: *Hellas* and the Mediterranean Sea

In Herodotus’ often quoted definition of collective Greek identity, the notion of shared territory is not mentioned as one of the key criteria (Hdt. 8.144.2).²⁴ The omission, as Malkin notes, reflects that *Hellas* was, in geographical terms, an approximate and changeable abstract concept:

With no contiguous territory, with settlements sprinkled on distant, disconnected shores...there was never a question of an overlap between a “Greek nation” and its “land.”²⁵

²⁴ For discussion of the absence of a territorial component in Hdt. 8.144.2, see esp. Saïd (2001) 275; Thomas (2001) 215.

²⁵ Malkin (2011) 13.

The densest concentration of Greek *poleis* was around the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula, known as the “mainland” (ἡπειρος). The Greek mainland was comprised of several regions including the Peloponnese, Attica, Boeotia, Epirus and Thessaly. The ancient Greek word ἡπειρος had several related meanings. It eventually came to mean “continent” (Pind. *Pyth.* 9.8; Aesch. *Pers.* 718), but in its initial and most basic form it designated *terra firma* as opposed to sea (Hom. *Il.* 1.485; *Od.* 3.90, 10.56). The Greeks also commonly used ἡπειρος to refer to a mainland, a certain type of terrestrial region that is part of a larger landform and has a significant stretch of coastline. Crucial to this meaning was the differentiation between the physical geography of a mainland and neighbouring islands. In the primary source tradition, the maiden and specific subject of ἡπειρος as “mainland” was the region of Epirus in western Greece, which lay opposite Corfu, Paxos, Lefkada and other Ionian islands (Hom. *Od.* 14.97, 18.84). As time progressed, ἡπειρος began to encompass more broadly the whole area that we now call mainland Greece. In the *Homeric Hymn to Delian Apollo*, composed in c. 600 BC, the sun god’s fame is said to spread ἀν’ ἡπειρον πορτιτρόφον ἥδ’ ἀνὰ νήσους (“over the heifer-rearing mainland and the islands” – *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 21).²⁶ Beyond the mainland, Greek *poleis* also dominated the landscape of western Anatolia and the multitude of islands in the Ionian and Aegean seas, such as Ithaca and Euboea. The wider Greek diaspora spanned over vast distances and kaleidoscopic environs. Pockets of Greek settlement were spread throughout Thrace, Asia Minor, the Levant, Egypt, North Africa, southern Italy, France, Iberia, around the coast of the Black Sea, and upon several large Mediterranean islands, including Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete and Cyprus (see fig. 4, pg. 66).

Early evidence of the Greeks’ geographic fragmentation is found in Homer’s “Catalogue of Ships.” The catalogue partitions the Achaean invasion force marshalled against Troy into many separate kingdoms, which occupy discrete pieces of land, from Odysseus’ Ithaca to Idomeneus’ Crete (Hom. *Il.* 2.494-759).²⁷ The Greeks tended to privilege people over place when describing and compartmentalising geographical space; hence why the majority of the entries in Homeric and Herodotean catalogues are

²⁶ Cf. Eur. *Herac.* 84-85. For discussion of the meanings of ἡπειρος, see LSJ (1940) s.v. ἡπειρος: 776; Georgacas (1969) 1-10; Malkin (2011) 48; Dueck (2012) 79.

²⁷ There is a natural logic and order to the catalogue, tracing a geographical sequence through the various lands which came to comprise the Achaean army: see Kirk (1985) 168-169, 183; Dougherty (2001) 24;

in the form of ethnonyms rather than toponyms (Hom. *Il.* 2.494-759, 2.815-875; Hdt. 3.89.1 – 3.96.1, 5.49.4-9, 5.52.1 – 5.53.1).²⁸ The idea of a bond between a people and the place that they inhabit – their territory – was regularly incorporated into the construction of local and regional Greek identities. Jeremy McInerney has illustrated

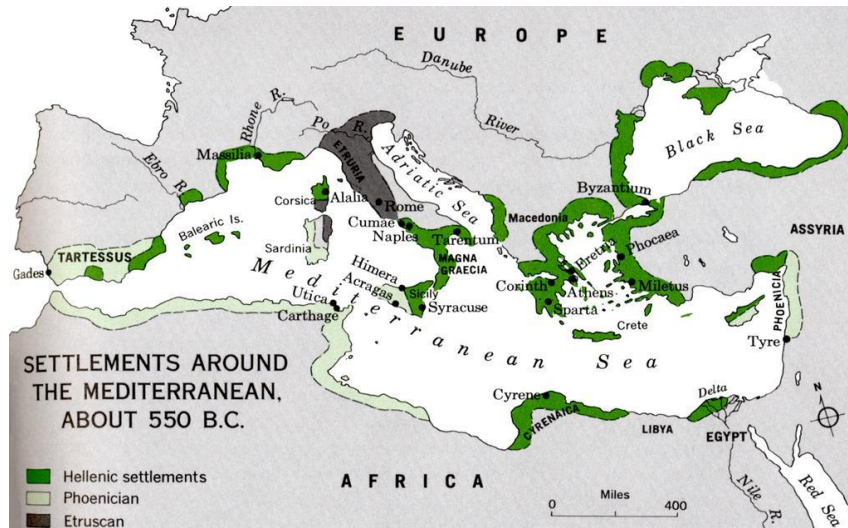


Fig. 4: “Settlements around the Mediterranean, about 550 B.C.”: a map demonstrating the span of Greek, Phoenician and Etruscan colonisation in the late Archaic period. Source: http://www.utexas.edu/courses/greeksahoy!/mediterranean_550.jpg

how the Phocians, for example, used mythology and genealogical tradition to formulate a regional identity that defined Phocis, an area of central mainland Greece encompassing the city-states of Delphi and Elatea, as “fatherland/homeland” (πατρίς) – Phocian space.²⁹ Πατρίς refers to the land of a place that the residents regard as their own.³⁰ The ancient Greeks were, in particular, emotionally invested in their native, independent *polis* – the fundamental unit of Greek political life. A sense of belonging to the community was fostered especially by local folklore and myth, as well as participation in civic ceremonies and religious festivals. The *polis* consisted of its people (δῆμος), the city itself (ἄστυ), and the surrounding cultivated hinterland (χώρα). Stone heaps (ἐρμῶι) demarcated its boundaries and separated it from wild

Mark (2005) 168-170; Purves (2010) 9. For the seminal place-name by place-name commentary on the “Catalogue of Ships,” see Simpson and Lazenby (1970) 18-151.

²⁸ Kirk (1985) 248; Barker (2010) 22.

²⁹ McInerney (2001) 51-73; see also Malkin (1994) 3; Finkelberg (2005) 18-19; Kaplan (2014) 307.

³⁰ In ancient Greek drama, the concept of πατρίς receives a great deal of attention: see Aesch. *Edonians*, F 31, *ap. schol. Ar. Thesm.* 135 = Sommerstein; Eur. *Aeolus*, F 30, *ap. Stob. Flor.* 3.39.5; Eur. *Erechtheus*, F 360a, *ap. Plut. Mor.* 809d = Collard and Cropp; Ar. *Aegeus*, F 1, 6, *ap. Clem. Al. Strom.* 6.2.11.3; Stob. *Flor.* 3.39.6 = Henderson; see also LSJ (1940) s.v. πατρίς: 1349.

terrains and neighbouring territories. Simon Hornblower explains that, with boundaries between city-states frequently established by wars over small strips of land, “the *polis* next door was another world.”³¹ Panhellenic sentiment was constantly competing against the internecine tensions that seethed throughout all parts of the Greek diaspora over rights to lands and various other issues.

In popular belief, *Hellas* is understood simply as the name that the ancient Greeks gave to their land and civilisation. The history and application of this name is, however, significantly complex. Ἑλλάς, Aristotle informs us, originally had a narrow definition, specifying the Dodona region in Epirus (Arist. *Mete.* 352a34). In Homer’s epics, Ἑλλάς simultaneously refers to a region in southern Thessaly reportedly founded by Hellen (Hom. *Il.* 2.683-684, 9.395; *Od.* 11.496) and, in an expanded sense, to all of northern and central mainland Greece (Hom. *Od.* 1.344, 4.726, 4.816, 15.80).³² The first extant use of Ἑλλάς to describe the whole of mainland Greece, including the Peloponnese, comes from Hesiod’s *Works and Days* (Hes. *Op.* 653). By the fifth century BC, the denotation of Ἑλλάς had broadened and diversified further, employed as a general appellation for any and all the lands inhabited by Greeks (Pind. *Ol.* 1.116-117; *Pyth.* 1.75, 2.60; Aesch. *Pers.* 50; Thuc. 1.3.1; Xen. *An.* 6.5.23).³³ A fragment of Xenophanes has one of the earliest examples of this broadest denotation. During his life, Xenophanes visited and lived in various Greek *poleis* in Ionia, the mainland and Sicily. He describes his migrations as a journey throughout *Hellas* (Xenophanes, F 3, *ap.* Diog. Laert. 9.19 = Graham):

ἦδη δ’ ἑπτὰ τ’ ἔασι καὶ ἐξήκοντ’ ἐνιαυτοὶ
βληστρίζοντες ἐμὴν φροντίδ’ ἄν’ Ἑλλάδα γῆν
ἐκ γενετῆς δὲ τότε ἦσαν ἐείκοσι πέντε τε πρὸς τοῖς,
εἴπερ ἐγὼ περὶ τῶνδ’ οἶδα λέγειν ἐτύμως.

Sixty-seven are now the years
that have tossed my thoughts *throughout the land of Greece*;

³¹ Hornblower (2011) 15-16; see also Casson (1974) 58; Malkin (1994) 7; Cole (2004) 2-4, 7-8, 13; Erskine (2005) 121-136; Mitchell (2007) 177-185. Cole (2010) 199 asserts that each *polis* placed itself at the centre of a mental map, distinguishing its territory from others.

³² See also Thuc. 1.3.1-4; Paus. 3.20.6.

³³ For discussion of the variations in the meaning of Ἑλλάς, see Bury (1895) 224; LSJ (1940) s.v. Ἑλλάς: 535; E. Hall (1989) 165; Coleman (1997) 210: n. 25; Harrison (2007) 47; Malkin (2011) 50-51, 214.

and from my birth there were then twenty-five years more,
if I know how to speak truthfully about these things.

To Xenophanes, *Hellas* is more than a standard and plainly demarcated territory; it exists in many places at once – everywhere that there are Greek peoples, city-states and culture.

Throughout the Classical period, the Greeks used Ἑλλάς flexibly to accord with either part or the entire compass of Greek settlement in the *oikoumene*. The most sweeping meaning of “any and all Greek lands” predominated, but the term also regularly operated as a referent for the Greek mainland. Herodotus, for instance, sometimes applies Ἑλλάς specifically to the mainland (Hdt. 7.175.2, 8.44.2). At other times, he applies it to the numerous Greek enclaves in Ionia, the Aegean, Sicily, southern Italy, Pontus, North Africa – and to the sum of these parts (Hdt. 1.92.1-2, 2.182.1-2, 3.137.4, 7.157.1-2).³⁴ Dating from the mid-fourth century BC, the *Periplus of Pseudo-Scylax* uniquely describes the mainland as ἡ Ἑλλάς συνεχὴς (“continuous Greece” – ps.-Scylax, 33.2, 65.2), land which the Greeks inhabit uninterrupted from the Peloponnese in the south to Epirus and Thessaly in the north.³⁵ The *periplus* differentiates “continuous Greece” from other parts of *Hellas* where the Greeks live discontinuously in colonies scattered along the coastlines of foreign lands. The meaning of Ἑλλάς as “any and all Greek lands” took precedence in the wake of the Persian invasion of mainland Greece, as an increased antipathy toward barbarians provided a reason to distinguish a Greek space from a barbarian space within the *oikoumene*.³⁶ *Hellas*, although not a definite, contiguous territory with demarcated borders, became a conceptual sphere of shared Greek culture and experience.

Following the wave of Greek colonisation in the Archaic period, one geographical space in particular – the Mediterranean Sea – became associated with the conceptual sphere of shared Greek culture and experience. Nearly all ancient Greek

³⁴ Cf. Eur. *IT*, 340-342; *Med.* 209-212, in which *Hellas* is restricted to the mainland. Iphigenia and Medea are depicted travelling between *Hellas* and the Euxine. The Euxine is distinguished from *Hellas* despite its shores housing numerous Greek colonies, such as Byzantium, Sinope and Trapezus.

³⁵ Shipley (2011) 114. The term “Pseudo-Scylax” comes from the name Scylax that was attributed to the *periplus* in antiquity. This attribution probably invokes the authority of Scylax of Caryanda, an explorer and navigator of the late sixth century BC, mentioned by Herodotus (Hdt. 4.44.1-2). Some information in the *periplus*, nevertheless, suggests a mid-fourth century BC composition, meaning that Scylax of Caryanda cannot be the author. The author’s true identity is unknown.

³⁶ For references to *Hellas* or “Greek land” in juxtaposition with “barbarian land,” see Aesch. *Pers.* 186-187; Soph. *Trach.* 1060-1061; Eur. *Heracl.* 189; *IA*, 1264-1266; Xen. *An.* 5.7.6.

poleis were wedded to the sea, and especially to the Mediterranean Sea and its constituent parts, such as the Adriatic, Ionian, Euxine and Aegean.³⁷ Most Greek settlements were built upon, within sight, or in close vicinity to Mediterranean coastlines. Malkin asserts that the Greeks interacted, moved and traded across the waters of the Mediterranean on a daily basis, participating in an extensive maritime network that directly and indirectly interconnected Greek communities as far removed as Pontic Olbia and Massalia.³⁸ Colonies such as those two were not secondary or peripheral, as much a part of the Mediterranean network as the *poleis* of the mainland, Ionia and the Aegean islands.³⁹ Greek mariners, merchants, fishermen, and *poleis* were all invested in the Mediterranean for various reasons. They competed on the sea for territory, resources, revenue, knowledge and power amongst themselves and with other seafaring peoples, primarily the Etruscans, Phoenicians and Carthaginians.⁴⁰ Extant and fragmentary *periploi* highlight that the Mediterranean network also facilitated Greek exploration and ethnographic inquiry. By the fifth century BC, the Greeks had explored nearly all sectors of the Mediterranean seaboard, from the Pillars of Heracles in the far west to Colchian Phasis on the Euxine's eastern shoreline. Horden and Purcell argue that Greek voyagers perceived the Mediterranean as a great river; *periploi* listed peoples and places in the order that they were encountered, representing the sea as a linear route defined by a sequence of ports and landmarks.⁴¹ Whilst the subdivisions of the Mediterranean Sea were more naturally experienced as independent entities, the Greeks felt that these waters together formed an integrated network and geographical space intimately connected with the construction of Greek ethno-cultural identities. The Mediterranean Sea was in a strong sense "home territory," both for individual *poleis* and for the Greeks in general.⁴² The Greeks understood that various foreign peoples also populated the Mediterranean's shores, navigating its nautical highways and contributing to the network. Underscoring the Mediterranean's multiculturalism is the depiction of

³⁷ For discussion, see esp. Horden and Purcell (2000) 10-11; Lindenlauf (2003) 416-417; Purves (2010) 9; Dueck (2012) 111-112. Kowalski (2012) 78-86 notes that the Greeks identified over a dozen subdivisions, which together comprised the Mediterranean Sea; see also Ceccarelli (2012) 25-29.

³⁸ Malkin (2011) 3-4, 13; see also Vlassopoulos (2007a) 91-93; Barker (2010) 5.

³⁹ See Malkin (1994) 2 on the Greek diaspora: "'Margins' are an accident either of our meagre sources or of the historical constructs which determine our perspective."

⁴⁰ On ancient Greek colonisation and trade throughout the Mediterranean, see esp. Boardman's classic study *The Greeks Overseas: The Early Colonies and Trade* (1980).

⁴¹ Horden and Purcell (2000) 11.

⁴² Horden and Purcell (2000) 10-11, 27; see also Karttunen (2002) 457; Finkelberg (2005) 63; Purcell (2005) 14; Abulafia (2011) 89-98, 124-128; Shipley (2011) 13. The study undertaken by Horden and

the *oikoumene* in Plato's *Phaedo*, which views Greeks and non-Greeks as living around the Mediterranean Sea like frogs about a pond (Pl. *Phd.* 109a-b).⁴³ Without going so far as to claim territorial ownership of the Mediterranean, the Greeks conceptualised the sea and its network as a zone of intensive interconnectivity integral to Greek culture and experience.

The ancient Greeks' material and psychological investment in the Mediterranean Sea is indicated by the ways in which the primary sources describe the sea and the names that they give to it. The name "Mediterranean" was a Latin coinage invented by the Roman grammarian Solinus in the third century AD. It translates into English as "in the middle of the land," meaning in-between the continents Europe, Asia and Africa.⁴⁴ In the Semitic languages of the Levant, the Mediterranean Sea was called the "Great Sea" (Num. 34.6-7; Josh. 1.4, 9.1, 15.47; Ezek. 47.10). The ancient Greeks referred to it by many different names.⁴⁵ Early on, they adopted the "Great Sea" appellation, evoking the Mediterranean's vast size as the aggregate of several smaller bodies of water (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 26, 18b, *ap. Arr. Anab.* 2.16.5; schol. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.284). One of the generic terms for sea, θάλαττα/θάλασσα, was the Mediterranean's most common title, however. Two episodes, one from Xenophon's *Anabasis* and the other from Herodotus' *Histories*, demonstrate that the seemingly unremarkable descriptor "the sea" had a greater socio-cultural significance than might be expected. In the *Anabasis*, when the Greek mercenary army first glimpses the eastern edge of the Euxine after a long retreat from Asia's continental interior, the soldiers rejoice with cries of θάλαττα θάλαττα ("The sea! The sea!" – Xen. *An.* 4.7.24). With the army comprised of an eclectic mix of Greeks hailing from various *poleis*, the sight of the sea, still far from the homes of most, reminded each individual of the local waters near their hometown. Predrag Matvejević, a historian of the Mediterranean world, states that "They all gazed at the same sea, yet each one saw his own."⁴⁶ The sum of these individual associations was a collective return to the recognisable coastal surroundings

Purcell responds critically to an interpretative framework established by the French historian Fernand Braudel, emphasising the unity of the Mediterranean world: see Braudel (1949); (2001).

⁴³ Cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 3-4; Cic. *Rep.* 2.9: *Ita barbarorum agris quasi adtexta quaedam videtur ora esse Graeciae* ("The shores of Greece are like hems stitched onto the lands of barbarian peoples").

⁴⁴ Dueck (2012) 80.

⁴⁵ For discussion of the different names that the ancient Greeks gave to the Mediterranean Sea, see esp. Harris (2005) 15.

⁴⁶ Matvejević (1999) 146. On the significance of the cry "θάλαττα θάλαττα," see Horden and Purcell (2000) 27; Tuplin (2004) 178. Rood (2004b) examines the phrase's impact in the modern imagination.

of the Mediterranean Sea and network that interconnected the soldiers as Greeks. Herodotus attributes a comparable sense of attachment to the Mediterranean and its constituent subdivisions to King Cleomenes and the Spartans. As mentioned earlier, Cleomenes refuses to aid the Ionians in their revolt against the Persians principally because a potential assault upon Susa would require a long three-month journey away from the sea (Hdt. 5.50.1-3).⁴⁷ Landlocked in the Peloponnese, Sparta has a reputation in modern thought as an insular *polis*, recoiling from commerce and the sea. This viewpoint ignores that Sparta had its own port forty kilometres to the south at Gythium and founded colonies throughout the Mediterranean, including Thera on the island of Santorini, Cnidus in Caria, and Taras (Taranto) in southern Italy.⁴⁸ The Mediterranean network interconnected Sparta with all those peoples living around the shores of the sea. Cleomenes' aversion to leaving the sea shows that the Spartans, along with the rest of the Greeks, perceived their interaction with the Mediterranean to be relevant to the construction of their *polis* identity.

In the primary sources, the Mediterranean Sea is described in a few other ways that more candidly signal its function as a zone of interconnectivity emblematic of Greek culture and experience. In addition to the “Great Sea” and “the sea,” the Greeks also termed the Mediterranean ἡ παρ’ ἡμῖν θαλάττα (“the sea by us/in our part of the world” – Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 18b, *ap. schol. Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.284; Pl. *Phd.* 113a) and ἡ ἡμετέρα θάλασσα (“our sea”). Each of these expressions is first extant in the fragments of Hecataeus' geographical treatise.⁴⁹ Hecataeus uses “our sea,” appropriated later by the Romans with the phrase *mare nostrum*, in a passage detailing one version of the Argonauts' famous voyage to and from Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 18a, *ap. schol. Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.259):

Ἑκαταῖος δὲ ὁ Μιλήσιος ἐκ τοῦ Φάσιδος διελθεῖν εἰς τὸν Ὠκεανόν,
εἶτα ἐκεῖθεν εἰς τὸν Νεῖλον, ὅθεν εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν θάλασσαν.

Hecataeus of Miletus [states that the Argonauts] passed through the Phasis into the ocean, then from there into the Nile, where they entered *our sea*.

⁴⁷ Purcell (2005) 15 points out that the idea of an *anabasis* – a journey upland into a continental interior from the coast – was a template for Greek strategic and geographic thinking throughout antiquity.

⁴⁸ See Malkin (1994) 3-10.

⁴⁹ There are some doubts about the authenticity of these expressions in Hecataeus' fragments, see esp. Chiai (2014) 90, n.3.

The exact coverage and connotation of “our sea” is unclear. The whole of the Mediterranean is probably meant, since “our sea” is juxtaposed with the notion of a circumambient outer ocean, which surrounds the entire *oikoumene*. The “our” implies “Greek,” suggesting that Hecataeus, as an itinerant and knowledgeable Milesian Greek, conceived of the Mediterranean as pervaded by an abundance of Greek *poleis*. He would have also recognised the sea’s involvement in the Greek way of life, pivotal to the commerce, diplomatic relations, cultural exchange and basic subsistence of Miletus and the majority of Greek communities. The Mediterranean Sea’s association with Greek culture and identity is further illustrated by Herodotus. In book one of the *Histories*, he contrasts the landlocked Caspian Sea with the continuous body of water formed by the Atlantic Ocean, the Erythraean Sea (Indian Ocean) and the Mediterranean. He names each of these major waterways, except the Mediterranean, which he defines as a space characterised by Greek maritime activity (Hdt. 1.203.1):

ἡ δὲ Κασπίη θάλασσα ἐστὶ ἐπ’ ἐωυτῆς, οὐ συμμίσγουσα τῇ ἑτέρῃ
θαλάσσῃ. τὴν μὲν γὰρ Ἑλληνες ναυτίλλονται πᾶσα καὶ ἡ ἔξω
στηλέων θάλασσα ἡ Ἀτλαντὶς καλεομένη καὶ ἡ Ἐρυθρὴ μία ἐοῦσα
τυγχάνει· ἡ δὲ Κασπίη ἐστὶ ἑτέρη ἐπ’ ἐωυτῆς.

The Caspian Sea is on its own, not connected with the other sea. *For that sea on which the Greeks sail (the Mediterranean)*, the sea outside the Pillars called the Atlantic, and the Erythraean Sea, all happen to be one; but the Caspian is separate by itself.

This passage, along with the other pieces of evidence discussed, reveals that the Greeks, looking inward from their disparate shores, viewed the Mediterranean as a network and unifying agent, interconnecting them with one another and with other peoples of the *oikoumene*.⁵⁰

From the perspective of many Greeks, one particularly important subdivision of the Mediterranean was the Aegean Sea. The Aegean was a critical nexus in the Mediterranean’s zone of Greek interconnectivity. It had Greek *poleis* more thickly

⁵⁰ Malkin (2011) 3-4.

concentrated around its islands and seabords, including the mainland and Ionia, than any other part of the Mediterranean. The historians Herodotus, Thucydides and Ctesias all refer to the Aegean by the appellation Ἑλληνικὴ θαλάσση (“Greek Sea”) (Hdt. 5.54.2, 7.28.2; Thuc. 1.4.1; Ctesias, *Indica*, F 45, *ap. Phot. Bibl.* 72.13 = Nichols). Athens, in particular, could lay claim to control over the “Greek Sea.” During the fifth century BC, the Athenians subordinated the Delian League members in the Aegean region and led the successful resistance against the Persian threat in battles at Eurymedon and Cyprian Salamis. The Peace of Callias, a treaty between the Delian League and Persia signed following the Battle of Cyprian Salamis in 449 BC, prohibited Persian satraps from coming within a three days’ journey of the Aegean by land and from sailing into the Aegean past Phaselis in Lycia and the Cyanean Rocks at the Bosphorus (Lycurg. *Leoc.* 72-73; Diod. Sic. 12.4.5).⁵¹ The sea west of these boundary markers was, therefore, the domain of Athens and its allies. As early as the Persian Wars, Athens had the reputation of a maritime superpower, unrivalled among the Greeks in its commercial and military dominance on the water. Herodotus details how, after the general Themistocles interpreted an oracular response from Delphi to mean that the Athenians should rely on the wooden walls of their fleet, they subsequently achieved resounding victories over the Persians at the battles of Salamis and Mycale on either side of the Aegean (Hdt. 7.143.2). In the context of the Peloponnesian War also, Thucydides contrasts the Athenians’ power on the sea with the Spartans’ strength on land (Thuc. 1.18.2). He notes that Athenian ships are able to sail the seas unchallenged even by the Persian king (Thuc. 2.62.2). The evidence highlights that the Aegean Sea was a vital conduit for Athens’ military and economic affairs. Symbolically, it came to represent an extension of Athenian territory beyond the traditional borders of the *polis*, with places as far away as Rhodes and the Hellespont (Dardanelles) at the south-eastern and north-eastern edges of the sea absorbed into the Delian League.

With the ancient Greeks dispersed widely and sporadically throughout the *oikoumene*, *Hellas* was not a standard, tangible territory; instead, it was an abstractly conceived

⁵¹ For comment on these prohibitions, see Constantakopoulou (2007) 3, 5, 20. The authenticity of the Peace of Callias is a controversial topic. Thucydides is strangely silent on the matter; nevertheless, numerous other sources, including Lycurgus and Diodorus, mention the treaty. 449 BC did accord with a long-term conclusion to direct military engagements between Greeks and Persians that had been ongoing

sphere of Greek culture and experience. In its association with *Hellas*, the Mediterranean Sea functioned as a zone of interconnectivity that bound together all Greeks, even those living in colonies in largely non-Greek regions. Greek knowledge, commerce and culture diffused throughout the network of exchange created by the Mediterranean and its various subdivisions, such as the Aegean Sea. The Aegean, its shores crowded with Greek *poleis*, was a critical nexus of interconnectivity for the Athenians and other Greeks in the region. The final section of this chapter assesses the conventional view that the ancient Greeks cognitively structured the ethnographic composition of the *oikoumene* in accordance with geographical ethnocentrism – the Greeks and the Mediterranean occupying the civilised centre and non-Greeks occupying the barbaric periphery.

Revising the Theory of Ancient Greek Geographical Ethnocentrism

The structuralist dichotomy of Self versus Other has heavily influenced the study of ancient Greek ethnography, prompting the theory of ancient Greek geographical ethnocentrism that now predominates in the scholarship.⁵² Romm explains the centre versus periphery dynamic:

Ethnocentrism, in the most literal sense of the word, denotes a construct of space which sees the center of the world as the best or most advanced location, and therefore demotes distant peoples to the status of unworthy savages.⁵³

Recent research into ancient geography and ethnography has identified a propensity for geographical ethnocentrism across a broad spectrum of ancient societies, including the Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Han Chinese, Roman, Aztec and more.⁵⁴ For Romans

since the Ionian Revolt; for discussion of the peace, see esp. Badian (1987) 1-37; Cawkwell (1997) 115-130.

⁵² See Hartog (1988) 349; Gould (1989) 94-98; Romm (1992) 46-47, 54-55; Bichler (2001) 45-48; Karttunen (2002) 457; Cole (2004) 75-76; Varisco (2007) 65; Gunter (2009) 57-58; Cole (2010) 199, 207; McInerney (2011) 96-101; Brotton (2012) 8-9, 24, 35; Dueck (2012) 188; Irby (2012) 83; Skinner (2012) 72.

⁵³ Romm (1992) 46.

⁵⁴ See several contributions to Raafaub and Talbert's *Geography and Ethnography: Perceptions of the World in Pre-Modern Societies*: Cole (2010) 199, 207; Hsin-Mei (2010) 51; Mundy (2010) 108-127; Raafaub and Talbert (2010) 4.

living during the time of the Principate, the Mediterranean Sea – *mare nostrum* – came to symbolise the extent of Roman dominion, with all the peoples living around the sea gradually integrated into the empire (Pompon. 1.6, 1.24, 2.86). Italy and Rome lay at the heart of the Mediterranean, and in the centre of the inhabited/known world – *orbis terrarum* (Strabo 6.4.1).⁵⁵ The peoples living outside the Roman Empire and at the edges of the world were enemies and barbarians soon to be conquered. The centre versus periphery binary attributed to ancient Greek thought largely lacked the same imperialist agenda. Cultural hierarchy is believed to have been the Greeks’ main concern, conceptually positioning themselves, dispersed around the Mediterranean, in the culturally supreme centre of the *oikoumene*, and non-Greeks around the culturally corrupted periphery, formed by continental interiors and distant habitats. According to the theory of ancient Greek geographical ethnocentrism, the lands of the periphery were considered to be paradigms of non-Greek culture and morality. The Greeks represented some places as ethically debased inversions of Greek civilisation, and others as realms of the mythological, supernatural and utopian. The common denominator for all lands of the periphery was their alienation from the apparent normalcy of Greek civilisation.

In book one of the *Histories*, Herodotus portrays geographical ethnocentrism as synonymous with the Persian worldview (Hdt. 1.134.2):

τιμῶσι δὲ ἐκ πάντων τοὺς ἄγχιστα ἐωυτῶν οἰκέοντας μετὰ γε
ἐωυτούς, δευτέρα δὲ τοὺς δευτέρους· μετὰ δὲ κατὰ λόγον
προβαίνοντες τιμῶσι· ἥκιστα δὲ τοὺς ἐωυτῶν ἐκαστάτῳ οἰκημένους
ἐν τιμῇ ἄγονται.

Indeed after themselves, they [the Persians] honour most of all those living closest to them, and then the second closest; and advancing onward they bestow honour according to this principle; and they hold in the least honour those living the farthest from them.

This passage dovetails with some Achaemenid royal inscriptions. The “Cyrus Cylinder” and the “Behistun Inscription” place the Persian homeland in southern Iran in a privileged, central geographical position, surrounded by outlying vassal states that

⁵⁵ Nicolet (1991) 30-33; Horden and Purcell (2000) 11-12.

stretch from the “upper sea” (Mediterranean) to the “lower sea” (Persian Gulf).⁵⁶ Echoing the centre versus periphery binary that Herodotus ascribes to the Persians is Antiphon’s assertion that humans inherently appreciate the customs of those peoples living near to them more so than the customs of those living far away. He furthermore points out that the association of progressions of geographical remoteness with corresponding regressions in culture provides an interpretative framework that is culturally relative, therefore biasing subsequent ethnographic inquiry (Antiphon, F 46b, *ap. POxy.* XI 1363 + 3647, F 2 = Graham). The theory of ancient Greek geographical ethnocentrism entails an uncompromising, pessimistic view of non-Greeks, which is compatible with the modern philosophical and anthropological concept of alterity. If we survey the corpus of ancient Greek sources and attempt to eschew modern preconceptions, however, it becomes evident that geographical ethnocentrism is merely one among many different and competing Greek approaches to ethnography, and not a fundamental, overarching principle.⁵⁷ With ancient Greek attitudes toward their own culture not uniformly self-flattering, it is yet to be adequately explained why so many of the primary sources still locate the Greeks in the centre of the *oikoumene*.⁵⁸ The novel analysis in this section suggests that the Greeks’ central self-positioning results from a variety of influences, which often prevail over the idea of a hierarchy of cultures. These influences include logical perceptions of the inhabited/known world’s overall geographic structure; climatological theory; and the linear cataloguing of geographic and ethnographic data.

The ancient Greeks routinely theorised that the *oikoumene* was enclosed by a circumambient outer ocean (ἐξω θάλαττα – Arist. *Mete.* 354a1-28; Strabo 2.5.18). This theory is first extant in the eighteenth book of the *Iliad*, when Homer describes the shield that Hephaestus fashioned for Achilles (Hom. *Il.* 18.606-607):

⁵⁶ For the text, translation and analysis of various inscriptions relevant to Persian geography and ethnography, see Hirsch (1985) 80; Kuhrt (1995) 676-678; Prontera (1998) 80; Kaplan (1999) 14-20; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001) 323-346; Briant (2002a) 180; Tuplin (2004) 155-157; Brosius (2006) 32; Haubold (2007) 57; Kuhrt (2007) 5-6, 135, 242, 469; Lane Fox (2007) 268; Rhodes (2007) 32; Collins (2008) 137; Harrison (2011a) 65; Prontera (2011) 189; Thomas (2011) 246; Haubold (2012) 8-18; Rollinger (2013) 93-95; Harrison (2014) 13-14.

⁵⁷ Scholars who share the view that geographical ethnocentrism had a only small role to play within the diversity of ancient Greek ethnography are in the minority: see Malkin (2001) 14; J. M. Hall (2002) 121; Vlassopoulos (2007a) 91-94; (2007b) 10; Malkin (2011) 7-8; Meier (2012) 24-25; Purcell (2012) 377.

⁵⁸ Malkin (2001) 14; (2011) 3-4, 13 argue that a system of networks tied individual Greek *poleis* to their colonies. Each mother city constituted the centre of its network interactions. These multiple network

ἐν δὲ τίθει ποταμοῖο μέγα σθένος Ὀκεανοῖο
ἄντυγα παρ πυμάτην σάκεος πύκα ποιητοῖο.

And on it he [Hephaestus] placed the great strength of the *river Oceanus*
around the outermost rim of the strongly-made shield.

Both Homer and Hesiod understood the outer ocean to be an infinite freshwater river and font of all terrestrial streams, personified by the Titan *Oceanus* (Hom. *Il.* 21.194; Hes. *Op.* 171; *Theog.* 243). By the sixth century BC, the mythological aspect had been replaced by the scientific observation of a vast, tangible saltwater ocean with named subsections that bordered different parts of the *oikoumene* (Ὀκεάνω γᾶς ἀπὸ πειράτων – Alc. F 345, *ap. schol. Ar. Av.* 1410 = Campbell). The reports of famous Greek and non-Greek navigators, who sailed the waters of the Atlantic in the west and north of the *oikoumene* and the Erythraean Sea in the south, provided an evidentiary basis for the outer ocean concept.⁵⁹ The concept had an analogue in Near Eastern geography, as demonstrated by the Babylonian Map of the World (see fig. 2, pg. 56).

Herodotus and Claudius Ptolemy are the only ancient Greek thinkers known to have doubted the validity of the outer ocean concept (Hdt. 2.21.1 – 2.23.1, 4.36.2, 4.45.1; Ptol. *Geog.* 7.7.5, 7.8.1). In the fourth book of the *Histories*, Herodotus states that some earlier Greek mapmakers depicted a circular *oikoumene* partitioned into two continents of equal size and bounded all round by an outer ocean (Hdt. 4.36.2):

γελῶ δὲ ὀρέων γῆς περιόδους γράψαντας πολλοὺς ἤδη καὶ οὐδένα
νοονεχόντως ἐξηγησάμενον· οἳ Ὀκεανόν τε ῥέοντα γράφουσι πέριξ
τὴν γῆν ἐοῦσαν κυκλοτερέα ὥς ἀπὸ τόρνου, καὶ τὴν Ἀσίην τῇ
Εὐρώπῃ ποιούντων ἴσην.

centre points meant that *Hellas* lacked a true, single centre around which a hierarchy of cultures could be arranged; see also Vlassopoulos (2007a) 91-94; Purcell (2012) 377; Collar (2014) 105.

⁵⁹ For the most comprehensive and up-to-date discussion of voyages beyond the Mediterranean in antiquity, see Roller (2006) *Through the Pillars of Herakles: Greco-Roman Exploration of the Atlantic*. There are numerous known examples of Greek maritime exploration outside the confines of the Mediterranean in the sixth century BC. These include the *Massaliote Periplus*; Colaeus of Samos' voyage to Tartessus in Iberia (Hdt. 4.152.1-4); Midacritus' voyage to the "Tin Islands" in the north Atlantic (Plin. *HN*, 7.179); and Scylax of Caryanda's voyage in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea in c. 515 BC, where he skirted the southern coast of Asia and rounded Arabia (Hdt. 4.44.1-3). Examples of non-Greek exploration known to the Greeks include the Phoenician circumnavigation of Africa in c. 600 BC (Hdt. 4.42.2-4); the voyage of the Carthaginian navigator Hanno along the northwest coast of Africa in the late sixth century BC (Plin. *HN*, 2.169; Arr. *Indica*, 43.11-12); and the voyage of his contemporary and compatriot Himilco to parts of Europe's Atlantic coastline (Plin. *HN*, 2.169).

I laugh seeing that many people have already having drawn maps of the world and not one of them has conceived of it reasonably; they draw the ocean flowing around the [inhabited] world which is circular as if [shaped] by means of a compass, and also they make Asia proportionate with Europe.

In Herodotus' opinion, the physical geography of the *oikoumene* is less systematised than these maps indicate (see fig. 5, pg. 78). The circumambient ocean, the circular landmass, and its perfect continental bisection are unrealistically symmetrical, grounded in speculation rather than empirical observation (Hdt. 4.37.1 – 4.45.2). Records of exploration outside of the Pillars of Heracles had established that the western and southern extremities of the *oikoumene* had an adjoining water border (Hdt. 1.202.4, 4.42.2-4, 4.43.1-7). To the far north and east of the *oikoumene* in Scythia and India, Greek explorers never caught sight of the ocean. Its existence in those parts was only hypothetical, persuading Herodotus and Ptolemy to assert that land extended indefinitely north and east into *terra incognita*, creating an irregular, oblong shaped *oikoumene* partially framed by ocean.⁶⁰

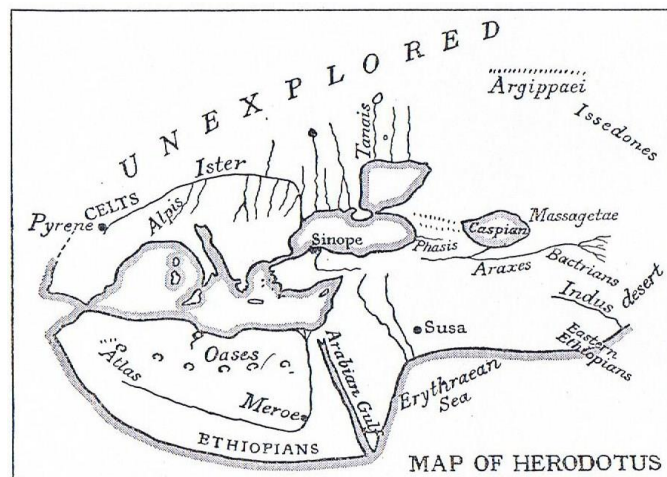


Fig. 5: The *oikoumene* according to Herodotus. Source: Thomson (1948) 99, fig. 12.

⁶⁰ Many Greek thinkers accepted the outer ocean hypothesis, even while perceiving the *oikoumene* to be roughly oblong in shape, instead of round – these included Ephorus, Aristotle, Dicaearchus and Eratosthenes: see e.g. Ephorus, *FGrH* 70, F 30a, *ap.* Strabo 1.2.28; Arist. *Mete.* 362b12-25; Dicaearchus, F 122, 123, *ap.* Agathemerus, 1.2, 1.5 = Keyser; Eratosthenes, F 30, 34, *ap.* Strabo 2.5.5-6, 2.5.9, 2.5.14 = Roller.

The early Greek world maps that Herodotus discusses at 4.36.2 are normally presumed to be of Milesian origin, produced by Anaximander and Hecataeus (Strabo 1.1.11; Agathemerus, 1.1; Diog. Laert. 2.1-2).⁶¹ Although Herodotus does not comment on the Mediterranean, the well-known symmetry of these maps signals that the sea was probably rendered as an internal, central space in juxtaposition with the outer ocean.⁶² This spatial opposition is alluded to in the fragment of Hecataeus where he describes the Argonauts as sailing from the Euxine up the river Phasis into the ocean, around the remote northern, western and southern sections of the *oikoumene*, and then down the river Nile and back into the Mediterranean Sea (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 18a, *ap. schol. Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.259). The two great bodies of water, the outer and the inner, are joined by two rivers assumed to flow between them. The reference in Plato's *Phaedo* to the compass of human habitation lying between the Phasis and the Pillars of Heracles offers a similar perspective. It presents the Mediterranean as the central geographical space about which the physical and human geography of the *oikoumene* is orientated (Pl. *Phd.* 109a-b).⁶³ Within this central space, the Greeks isolated the exact centre point of the *oikoumene*. According to Agathemerus, Delphi was the traditional centre point of ancient Greek world maps (Agathemerus, 1.2):

οἱ μὲν οὖν παλαιοὶ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἔγραψον στρογγύλην, μέσην δὲ
κειῖσθαι τὴν Ἑλλάδα, καὶ ταύτης Δελφούς· τὸν ὀμφαλὸν γὰρ ἔχειν
τῆς γῆς.

So the ancients drew the inhabited world as round, and in the middle lay
[mainland] Greece, and in the middle of this lay Delphi; for it holds the
navel of the earth.

Delphi was situated in central mainland Greece on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, fifteen kilometres from the Corinthian Gulf. It was the home of Apollo's most famous sanctuary and Oracle, administered by the Delphic amphictyony. During the Archaic period, the Oracle became one of the premier panhellenic religious institutions. Also,

⁶¹ See Pearson (1939) 31, 61-62; Berger (1964) 164-165; Dilke (1985) 23-24, 56-57; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 21; Couprie (2003) 194-196; Munn (2006) 179-180; Romm (2010) 217.

⁶² For references to the Mediterranean as the "inner sea" in juxtaposition with the outer ocean, see esp. Strabo 1.1.10, 1.3.4.

⁶³ Cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 3-4.

the sanctuary hosted the Pythian Games, a panhellenic art, dance, and athletic competition celebrated every four years in honour of Apollo. Delphi thereby acted as an “internal contact zone,” at the heart of a network that interconnected Greeks through religious, social, and cultural interactions.⁶⁴ Delphi’s claim to be the centre point of the *oikoumene* was legitimised by the *omphalos*. According to legend, Zeus sent out two eagles to fly across the world and meet at its centre. The eagles converged at Delphi and so the *omphalos*, an egg-shaped stone, was set down in Apollo’s temple to mark it as the “navel” of the world.⁶⁵

Malkin has argued that none of the primary sources explicitly associate Delphi’s perceived status as the exact centre point of the *oikoumene* with hierarchical and xenophobic connotations, such as the notion of a Greek centre that is superior and a barbarian periphery that is inferior.⁶⁶ There were other factors, removed from geographical ethnocentrism, involved in the Greeks’ selection of a centre point. Delphi was a logical option, as it was a centripetal site that drew people together in body and mind via its religious and cultural operations. Though not situated on the coast, it was in close vicinity to the Corinthian Gulf which housed many important ports. Greeks from all over the Mediterranean and likewise some non-Greeks, most famously those at the behest of King Croesus of Lydia (r. 560 – 547 BC), travelled by both land and sea to consult the Oracle (Hdt. 1.46.2 – 1.56.3, 1.85.1-2, 1.90.4 – 1.91.6). McInerney notes that in the minds of Greek colonists especially, Delphi was an important symbol of Greek culture:

Delphi, by virtue of colonial dedications and the need for colonies to retain a connection of sorts with the cultural homeland of Greece, was well suited, as colonies started to populate the western Mediterranean, to serve as a symbolic centre.⁶⁷

Delphi was a hub of the Mediterranean network and central space of the *oikoumene* that interconnected all Greeks. By conceptually positioning Delphi in the exact centre of the

⁶⁴ Dougherty and Kurke (2003) 9-10; see also McInerney (2011) 96-101; Eckerman (2014) 22.

⁶⁵ For several references to the *omphalos*, see Pind. *Nem.* 7.33; *Pyth.* 4.74; Aesch. *Eum.* 166; Eur. *Ion.* 223-224; *Or.* 331; Pl. *Resp.* 427c; Strabo 9.3.6; Paus. 10.16.3. For discussion, see esp. Dougherty and Kurke (2003) 9-10; Cole (2004) 74; Prontera (2007) 177; Cole (2010) 199; Malkin (2011) 20; Skinner (2012) 11.

⁶⁶ Malkin (2011) 20.

⁶⁷ McInerney (2011) 101.

oikoumene, the Greeks naturally associated the Greek mainland, which had Delphi more or less at its midpoint, with centrality. As the Greeks' most densely populated area of residence, the mainland was the part of the *oikoumene* with which many Greeks were most familiar. Although Delphi was the Greeks' most common choice for the exact centre point of the *oikoumene*, other locales on the mainland and even other parts of the Greek world were sometimes preferred. There are examples where the centre point corresponds with the specific location in which the map or literary geography has been produced. The Greek's geographic knowledge of the world beyond his local area was in a constant state of flux, evolving in line with the progress of Greek colonisation, trade and exploration. The changeable picture of the wider *oikoumene* contrasted with the more stable picture of the Greek's familiar home surroundings. Any correlation between the perceived centre of the *oikoumene* and the providence of the overall worldview related to the dominant Greek approach to geographic and ethnographic data documentation. The approach, characteristic of Greek *periploi* and land itineraries, was hodological, with places and peoples catalogued in the order that they were encountered travelling to and from a particular Greek locale, and defined spatially by their position in the linear series that radiated out from there. Any such locale, as the beginning and end point for exploration, logically became the central reference point for subsequent conceptualisations of world geography and ethnography.⁶⁸

Agathemerus' statement about the traditional centre point of ancient Greek world maps has been used to support the argument that the two earliest known Greek cartographers, Anaximander and Hecataeus, orientated their maps around Delphi (Agathemerus, 1.2).⁶⁹ The maps must have closely resembled one another, with Hecataeus using Anaximander's depiction of the *oikoumene* as a template to improve upon (Anaximander, T 6 = Graham; Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, T 12a, *ap.* Agathemerus, 1.1). Since our sources provide minimal detailed information about what was depicted on these maps, there has been some scope for alternative theories about the likely centre point. Anaximander and Hecataeus are possibly the subjects of Herodotus' discussion of early mapmakers who drew the *oikoumene* as circular, surrounded by a circumambient ocean and divided into two proportionate continents, Europe and Asia (Hdt. 4.36.2). The reported partition of Hecataeus' geographical treatise into two books entitled "On Europe" and "On Asia" suggests that his map, at least, had a bipartite continental

⁶⁸ See e.g. Hdt. 5.49.4-9; ps.-Scylax, 1-114.

⁶⁹ For this argument, see esp. Dicks (1960) 20-21; Dilke (1985) 24; Alonso-Núñez (2003) 147.

configuration. The fragments of “On Europe” supply information about peoples and places from Iberia to Scythia. The fragments of “On Asia” do the same from India to North Africa, meaning that Hecataeus merged the landmass of Libya into Asia (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 334, *ap.* Steph. Byz. s.v. Μάζυες).⁷⁰ The boundary line between Europe and Asia was the continuous water passage formed by the Mediterranean Sea, Aegean Sea, Hellespont, Propontis (Sea of Marmara), Bosphorus, Euxine, and either the river Phasis or Tanais (Don) (Aesch. *Pers.* 66-67, 722-723; *PV*, 790; Hdt. 4.36.2 – 4.45.2).⁷¹ Europe lay to the north; Asia to the south; and the focal area of the boundary line was approximately midway between the eastern and western limits of the *oikoumene*. This focal area was also where the gap between the two continents narrowed considerably, stretching from the Aegean to the Bosphorus (see fig. 6, pg. 82). The geometric symmetry of the bipartite continental configuration would have helped determine the centre point of the *oikoumene*, establishing it in the vicinity of the focal area of the continental divide. Delphi, given that it was on the Greek mainland bordering the western Aegean, would have been a suitable fit as the centre point of Anaximander’s and Hecataeus’ maps.

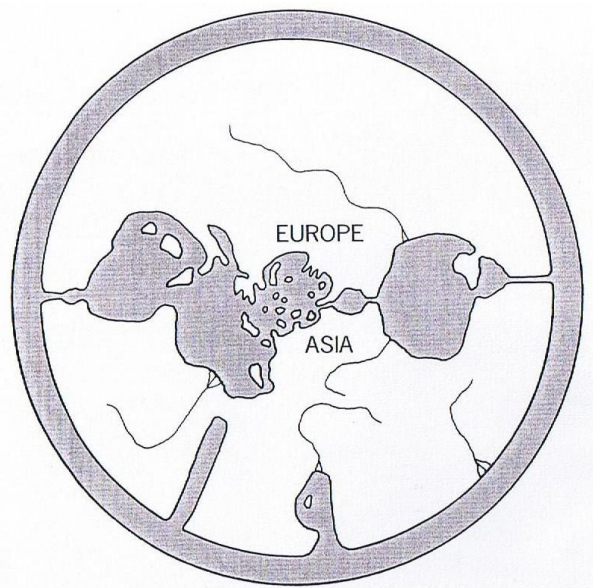


Fig. 6: “Conjectural rendering of the map of Hecataeus”: the image highlights the symmetry formed by the outer ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, and by the bipartite continental configuration that has Europe in the north and Asia in the south. Source: Munn (2006) 215, fig. 13.

⁷⁰ For the view that Anaximander and Hecataeus advanced a bipartite continental configuration, see Pearson (1939) 31, 61-62; Berger (1964) 164-165; Dilke (1985) 23-24, 56-57; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 21; Couprie (2003) 194-196; Munn (2006) 179-180; Romm (2010) 217. For the contrary view, that they conceived of three separate continents, see Kahn (1960) 82-83; James (1972) 29; Engels (1999) 122; Hahn (2001) 210; Naddaf (2003) 49-55; Irby (2012) 90-91.

⁷¹ W. H. Parker (1960) 278; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 21-22; Munn (2006) 180; Romm (2010) 216-217.

Other viable options include Delos and Miletus – Delos because of its location in the middle of the Aegean sandwiched between the two continents; and Miletus because it is the place, on the Aegean’s eastern coast, where Anaximander and Hecataeus lived and constructed their maps.⁷²

The ancient Greeks recognised climatological theory to be an important factor in the demarcation of a place’s geographic location within the *oikoumene*. At its most rudimentary, Greek climatological theory overlapped with the bipartite continental configuration – Europe in the northern half of the *oikoumene* was cold and Asia in the southern half was hot.⁷³ This temperature allocation obviously oversimplified the meteorology, extrapolating knowledge of environments like the scorched Sahara Desert in the south and the icy Pontic Steppe in the north (Hdt. 2.32.1-7, 4.31.1-2). The Greeks, strewn around the Mediterranean, occupied the crossroads between the continents and the juncture of hot and cold. Even as the Greeks further developed their climatological knowledge and adjusted the continental system to incorporate Libya, they continued to assign themselves a median position in the *oikoumene* that possessed a mild climate and spanned the continental divides. Herodotus, for example, explains that *Hellas* enjoys by far the most clement weather of all lands (Hdt. 3.106.1). He describes Ionia in a similar manner (Hdt. 1.142.1-2):

οὔτε γὰρ τὰ ἄνω αὐτῆς χωρία τὼν τὸ ποιεῖ τῇ Ἰωνίῃ οὔτε τὰ κάτω
οὔτε τὰ πρὸς τὴν ἡῶ οὔτε τὰ πρὸς τὴν ἐσπέρην, τὰ μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ
ψυχροῦ τε καὶ ὑγροῦ πιεζόμενα, τὰ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ θερμοῦ τε καὶ
ἀχμῶδους.

For neither northwards nor southwards of it, nor to the east nor to the west
does the land produce the same as in Ionia, being troubled here by both the
cold and wet, and there by both the heat and drought.

⁷² For Delos, see esp. Munn (2006) 193, 208; for Miletus, see esp. Couprie (2003) 197. Naddaf (2003) 49, 52-55 asserts that the Nile Delta may have occupied the centre of Anaximander’s map, with the Nile itself acting as a north-south meridian line. He posits that Anaximander’s map and treatise aimed to demarcate the current *oikoumene*, and explain how and why civilisation spread out from Egypt, the cradle of humanity.

⁷³ See Dicks (1960) 20-21; Romm (2010) 216-217. On the importance of the hot versus cold binary in Greek cosmological and geographical thought, see esp. Lloyd (1966) 29.

On the whole, Herodotus' portrayal of Ionian character is negative. The Ionians are to his mind slavish and downtrodden, succumbing to the rule of the Persian king (Hdt. 1.143.1-3, 4.142.1).⁷⁴ A possible rationalisation of this cynicism is found elsewhere in the *Histories* and also in the contemporary Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places*, when it is asserted that a mild climate and fecund environment in Asia engender a feeble human disposition (Hdt. 9.122.2-4; Hippoc. *Aer.* 12.10-45, 16.3-43, 23.1-41). Such reasoning, if applied specifically to Ionia, as a median, temperate region located in Asia, would make it an undesirable location to inhabit, at odds with the theory of ancient Greek geographical ethnocentrism. There is another primary source, however, that is undeniably consistent with geographical ethnocentrism. In the *Politics*, Aristotle argues that peoples who inhabit Europe and the cold regions are relatively free and full of spirit, but lack intelligence, skill and the ability to rule others. The peoples of Asia are, on the other hand, intelligent and skilful, but because they are deficient in spirit they are by nature slaves. The Greeks, occupying the intermediate geographic position on the innermost coastal fringes of both continents, combine the good qualities of Asiatics and Europeans – they are spirited, intelligent, free and capable of ruling humankind (Arist. *Pol.* 1327b18-33). Aristotle thus envisions the centre of the *oikoumene* to be a beneficial location that is inhabited by Greeks who are superior to those peoples living beyond the centre, in the interiors and remote regions of Asia and Europe.⁷⁵

Xenophon, in *Ways and Means* (c. 354 BC), also interprets the centre of the *oikoumene* to be a beneficial location (Xen. *Por.* 1.6-8):

οὐκ ἂν ἀλόγως δέ τις οἰηθείη τῆς Ἑλλάδος καὶ πάσης δὲ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀμφὶ τὰ μέσα οἰκεῖσθαι τὴν πόλιν. ὅσω γὰρ ἂν τινες πλεον ἀπέχωνιν αὐτῆς, τοσοῦτω χαλεπωτέροις ἢ ψύχεσιν ἢ θάλπεσιν ἐντυγχάνουσιν... ἔτι δὲ ταῖς μὲν πλείσταις πόλεσι βάρβαροι προσοικούντες πράγματα παρέχουσιν· Ἀθηναῖς δὲ γειτονεύουσιν αἱ καὶ αὐτὰι πλεῖστον ἀπέχουσι τῶν βαρβάρων.

⁷⁴ For discussion of Herodotus' negative opinion of the Ionians, see e.g. Emlyn-Jones (1980) 169-170; Alty (1982) 1-14; Cartledge (1993) 38-39; Harrison (2011b) 48-49.

⁷⁵ The wider intellectual context of Aristotle's geographical ethnocentrism involves a general debate about whether some people can be slaves by nature (φύσις) and others slaves only by convention (νόμος): see Isaac (2004) 68-72, 174-178.

One might reasonably suppose that the city [Athens] dwells at the centre of *Hellas*, nay of the whole inhabited world. For the further anyone goes from it, greater is the heat or cold that they meet...Further, on the borders of most cities live barbarians who trouble them; but the cities neighbouring Athens are themselves remote from the barbarians.

Since the Athenians so greatly influenced Greek affairs over the course of the Classical period and since much of our primary source material is of Athenian derivation, Athens emerges as one of the principal alternatives to Delphi as the centre point of the *oikoumene*. Unlike Delphi, Athens could not claim to be literally in the centre of mainland Greece. Its perceived central position in *Hellas* and the whole *oikoumene* was predominantly metaphorical, though Xenophon does generically associate the *polis* with a median latitudinal position between extremes of hot and cold. The primary purpose of *Ways and Means* is to set out a plan to alleviate Athens' severe financial crisis in the decades following the Peloponnesian War. Xenophon explains how the city's geographic location is suitable for the generation of immense revenue. He states that every traveller journeying from one end of *Hellas* to the other, whether by land or sea, passes through Athens as the centre of a circle (Xen. *Por.* 1.6). While not entirely sea-girt, Athens is like an island in that it engages in extensive maritime trade in all directions. Surrounded by Greek settlements, the city's distance from foreign lands minimises the potential for barbarians to harass it and threaten its prospects for economic success (Xen. *Por.* 1.8). The basis of Athens' centrality is its function as a premier hub of commerce and economic interconnections.⁷⁶ Like Delphi, Athens was a centripetal site of the Mediterranean network and its Aegean nexus. The centre versus periphery binary in *Ways and Means* relates to economic advantage more so than cultural hierarchy. The financial crisis currently crippling Athens could not last forever, as its central location in the *oikoumene*, at a crossroads of goods and peoples but insulated from foreign intervention, means that it is favourably sited to attain supreme wealth once again.

With a wide range of factors affecting the notion of Greek centrality in the *oikoumene*, there is cause to revise how the Greeks situated non-Greek peoples in space,

⁷⁶ For further discussion of Athens' centrality, referencing its function as a premier hub of commerce and economic interconnections, see Eur. F 981, *ap.* Plut. *Mor.* 604e = Collard and Cropp; Thuc. 2.38.2; ps.-Xen. [*Ath. pol.*] 2.7; Isoc. *Paneg.* 42.

looking beyond the prescriptive notion of a culturally hierarchical centre versus periphery binary. At the farthest remove from the centre point of the *oikoumene*, the Greeks ordinarily placed the outer ocean, a blank canvas that separated space inhabited and known from *terra incognita*. The ocean was populated by mythologies, tales of the supernatural, monstrous and dangerous, which were of great cultural importance to the Greeks. Since the *oikoumene* was defined by human habitation and interconnections, the ocean provided a perfect liminal setting for the imaginative animation of otherworldly phenomena.⁷⁷ The superhuman exploits of Greek heroes often occurred in the vicinity of the ocean. Perseus' quest to slay the Gorgon Medusa took him to its shores, and so too did Heracles' pursuit of the golden apples in the Garden of the Hesperides, where he overcame the one hundred-headed dragon Ladon (*Cypria*, F 30, *ap.* Ath. 8.334b = West; Hes. *Theog.* 215-217, 274-275, 287-294, 334-335). The ocean played host to some frightening and objectionable creatures, but also utopic realms and netherworlds. In the Atlantic, west of the Pillars of Heracles, the Greeks located the blessed afterlife domicile of mortals related to gods and heroes, called the "Elysian Field," or alternatively the "Isles of the Blessed" (Hom. *Od.* 4.564-568; Hes. *Op.* 170-175). It is likewise in that sector of the ocean where Plato sets the story of the archetypal ideal city-state, Atlantis (Pl. *Criti.* 108e, 113c; *Ti.* 25a). On the northern coast of the *oikoumene* beyond the *Boreas* ("north wind") and the Riphean Mountains, there was rumoured to exist another utopia – *Hyperborea*. The Greeks closely associated the Hyperboreans, who apparently venerated Apollo, with their own civilisation. The god wintered amongst the Hyperboreans, and they sent gifts to him that arrived at Dodona before being passed from place to place until reaching his temple on Delos. As such, the Hyperboreans were imagined to be a sophisticated people who lived in perpetual happiness (Pind. *Isth.* 6.23; *Pyth.* 10.29-46; Hdt. 4.13.1, 4.32.1 – 4.36.1; Diod. Sic. 2.47.1-4).⁷⁸ The outer ocean vacillated in its socio-cultural meaning, a space at the edges of the *oikoumene* and of reality that was home to a broad spectrum of the otherworldly, from the dystopian to the utopian.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ For analysis of the use of mythology to delineate the outer ocean and its shores, see Romm (1992) 21-23, 41-43; Georges (1994) 2; Cole (2004) 8; Nichols (2011) 18-19; Skinner (2012) 79.

⁷⁸ Romm (1989) 97-113 argues that the Hyperboreans are a prototypical example of inverse ethnocentrism, depicted as an ultra-civilised people, who live far removed from the Greeks and the centre of the *oikoumene*.

⁷⁹ On the existence of both the dystopian and utopian at the utmost limits of the *oikoumene*, see Dougherty (2001) 15; Nichols (2011) 18-19; Skinner (2012) 79.

The Greeks perceived the space between the outer ocean and the coastlines of the Mediterranean Sea to contain a diverse tableau of lands and peoples. The most remote of these lands, extending toward the distant edges of the continents, they termed ἑσχατιαί (“extremities”) (Hom. *Od.* 1.23). The definition of *eschatiai* developed out of the experience of the Greek *polis*. The urban centre and surrounding agricultural territory of the *polis* were distinguished from outlying wild terrains (*eschatiai*), which were often mountainous or forested and not well-suited for crop cultivation.⁸⁰ A common Greek worldview envisaged the *oikoumene* as framed by four main expansive *eschatiai* at its northern, southern, eastern and western edges (see fig. 7, pg. 87). Ephorus describes the frame in a fragment of his universal history compiled in the mid-fourth century BC (Ephorus, *FGrH* 70, F 30a, *ap.* Strabo 1.2.28):

τῶν περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν τόπων εἰς τέτταρα μέρη
διηρημένων, τὸ πρὸς τὸν ἀπηλιώτην Ἰνδοὺς ἔχειν, πρὸς νότον δὲ
Αἰθίοπας, πρὸς δύσιν δὲ Κελτοὺς, πρὸς δὲ βορρᾶν ἄνεμον Σκύθας.

Dividing the places about the heaven and the earth into four parts, the
Indians possess that toward the east, the Ethiopians that toward the south,
the Celts that toward the west, and the Scythians that toward the north wind.

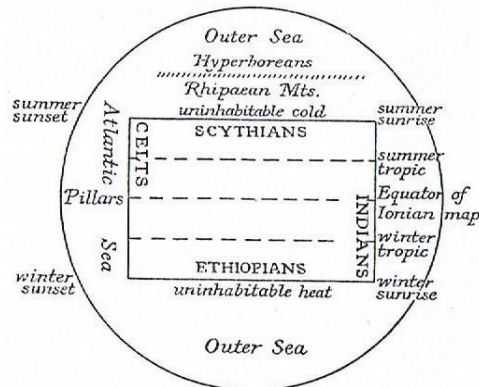


Fig. 7: Ephorus' *oikoumene* and the four main *eschatiai*. Source: Thomson (1948) 97, fig. 10.

⁸⁰ For discussion of the concept of ἑσχατιαί, see LSJ (1940) s.v. ἑσχατος: 699-700; Hartog (1988) 13; Romm (1992) 32-47; Zingross (1998) 30, 53; Bichler (2001) 24-79; Karttunen (2002) 457; Cole (2004) 75-76; Dorati (2011) 292. Alexander the Great utilised the concept of ἑσχατιαί in his propaganda. During his operations in Bactria and Sogdiana, Alexander reached the river Jaxartes (Syr-Darya) and founded a city, Alexandria-Eschate (“Alexandria-the-Farthest”), on its southern bank. This city was intended as a base for future military operations against the Scythians of Europe, but it also stood as a symbol of the extent of Alexander’s dominion in the farthest, most remote regions of Asia (Curt. 7.6.13; Arr. *Anab.* 4.1.1-4; Justin 12.5.12): see esp. Holt 1989: 57-58; Fraser (1996) 151-153; Cohen (2013) 252-255.

W. A. Heidel influentially argued that this view of the *oikoumene* and *eschatiai* may have originated with Hecataeus' map and geographical treatise.⁸¹ The fragments of Hecataeus' treatise mention the Indians, Ethiopians, Celts and Scythians, but whether or not they were associated with *eschatiai* is unknown. By the fifth century BC though, the four main *eschatiai*, occupying the north, south, east and west, had become canonical (Aesch. *PV*, 1-2, 809; *Supp.* 284-286; Hdt. 2.33.3, 3.106.2, 3.114.1, 4.16.1-2). Each was sweeping in geographic extent and ethnographic gamut, with a variety of different tribes and regions incorporated under a broad heading. There existed other *eschatiai*, such as Arabia and Bactria, which the Greeks thought of as ancillaries or sometimes alternatives to those corresponding with the cardinal directions.⁸²

In the ancient Greek cultural consciousness, the *eschatiai* were distant spaces, comprised by peoples and physical landscapes alien to all parts of *Hellas* and its familiar surrounds. The Greeks were intrigued by the unusualness of the *eschatiai*. As such, they deemed many of the materials, resources and wildlife found therein to be marvellous and exotic wonders (θαύματα). Herodotus, whose discussions of the *eschatiai* are the most detailed of those left extant, depicts them as objects of Greek fascination (Hdt. 3.116.3):

αἱ δὲ ὦν ἐσχατιαὶ οἴκασι, περικληΐουσαι τὴν ἄλλην χώραν καὶ ἐντὸς ἀπέργουσαι, τὰ κάλλιστα δοκέοντα ἡμῖν εἶναι καὶ σπανιώτατα ἔχειν αὗται.

The extremities, as they surround and encompass the rest of the world within, appear to have those things which we believe to be the most beautiful and rarest.⁸³

In regard to the remote western parts of Europe, where the Celts live, Herodotus admits that his knowledge is minimal. He is reluctant to verify reports that the commodities tin and amber, highly valued by the Greeks, are sourced from the region; though, he is

⁸¹ Heidel (1937) 17-18.

⁸² In the *Histories*, Herodotus describes Ethiopia as the most remote land (*eschatia*) to the southwest of the *oikoumene* (Hdt. 3.114.1), and Arabia as the most remote land to the south (Hdt. 3.107.1).

⁸³ Cf. the similar statement at Hdt. 3.106.1: αἱ δ' ἐσχατιαὶ κῶς τῆς οἰκεομένης τὰ κάλλιστα ἔλαχον ("Somehow the extremities of the inhabited world obtained by lot the most beautiful things").

certain that they must originate from one of the *eschatiai* (Hdt. 3.115.1-2). Greek curiosity about the *eschatiai* was also piqued by rumours of peoples who were visibly dissimilar from themselves and their neighbours. In Greek accounts of India especially, several native tribes are alleged to have monstrous physical appearances. In the fragments of his *Indica*, Ctesias comments on the existence of “shadow-feet men” (*Sciapodes*) and “dog-headed men” (*Cynocephaloi*). Their appearances stigmatise the *Sciapodes* and *Cynocephaloi* as ugly and wild. Ctesias’ account of their customs is more complimentary, however, describing them as “just” (δίκαιος) and therefore compatible with quintessential Greek virtues, despite their departure from the Greek perception of normality (Ctesias, *Indica*, F 45ρα, T 19, F 45, *ap.* Plin. *HN*, 7.23; Gell. *NA*, 9.4.1-51; Phot. *Bibl.* 72.37-43 = Nichols).

This ambivalent attitude toward inhabitants of the *eschatiai* is also seen in Greek accounts of Scythia. Aeschylus’ references to Scythia, for instance, acknowledge the numerous different tribes comprising it, and express a range of views, from indictments of the savagery of some tribes to praise of the just nature (δικαιοσύνη), hospitality (ξενία) and good laws (εὐνομία) of others (Aesch. *PV*, 715-717; Aesch. F 196, 281c, *ap.* Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἀβιοί; Strabo 7.3.7 = Sommerstein). Herodotus comparably mentions some tribes that appear particularly vicious and uncultured, such as the cannibalistic “man-eaters” (*Androphagi*) and the “one-eyed men” (*Arimaspi*) (Hdt. 4.106.1, 4.13.1), while also praising the noble disposition (ἄριστος) of the Royal Scythians (Hdt. 4.20.1). In the fragments of his universal history, Ephorus notes that some Scythians are cannibalistic and exceedingly cruel, whereas others excel in justice, frugality (εὐτέλεια) and freedom, all qualities that the Greeks highly esteemed (Ephorus, *FGrH* 70, F 42, *ap.* Strabo 7.3.9). A degree of optimism and admiration similarly accompanies Greek depictions of Ethiopia (modern Sudan). Herodotus points out the spectacular nature of Ethiopia’s resources, flora, fauna and inhabitants (Hdt. 3.114.1):

ἀποκλινομένης δὲ μεσαμβρίας παρήκει πρὸς δύνοντα ἥλιον ἡ
 Αἰθιοπία χώρα ἐσχάτη τῶν οἰκεομένων· αὕτη δὲ χρυσόν τε φέρει
 πολλὸν καὶ ἐλέφαντας ἀμφιλαφίας καὶ δένδρεα πάντα ἄγρια καὶ
 ἔβενον καὶ ἄνδρας μεγίστους καὶ καλλίστους καὶ μακροβιωτάτους.

Stretching toward the setting sun and inclining to the south, Ethiopia is the most remote part of the inhabited world; it produces an abundance of gold, huge elephants, all kinds of wild trees, ebony, and the tallest, most handsome and longest-lived men.

Ethiopia's portrayal as one of the *eschatiai* parallels the mythologies about utopic realms in or near to the outer ocean – the Elysian Field, Atlantis and *Hyperborea*. A. Nichols asserts that the ancient Greeks frequently romanticised the *eschatiai*:

In essence, the lands at the edge of the world are often seen as utopic realms where people live justly while the land provides their sustenance and wealth in plenty.⁸⁴

The perception of the *eschatiai* in ancient Greek geographic and ethnographic thought fluctuates from positive to negative and everything in-between, and so cannot be rigidly aligned with a culturally hierarchical centre versus periphery binary.

The *eschatiai* incorporated a diverse array of physical landscapes and resulting modes of human existence. The meaning of οἰκουμένη as the “inhabited/known world” had an ancillary connotation, which entailed that most of the terrain within was arable, able to sustain sedentary human habitation.⁸⁵ In Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, the main character Cyrus the Great describes arability as the essential property that makes land desirable and viable to invade (Xen. *Cyr.* 4.4.5):

οἰκουμένη μὲν γὰρ χώρα πολλοῦ ἄξιον κτήμα· ἐρήμη δ' ἀνθρώπων
οὔσα ἐρήμη καὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν γίγνεται.

For an inhabited land is a possession of much value; but a land destitute of people is likewise destitute of produce/good things.

⁸⁴ Nichols (2011) 19.

⁸⁵ Munn (2006) 188-195 suggests that the association of οἰκουμένη with arable land dates back to the lost world map of Anaximander. He argues that the concept was specifically connected with the Lydian Empire under which Anaximander and the Milesians lived, with cultivable, productive soils in Asia Minor seen to be the foundation of Lydian sovereignty on the earth.

The idea that the agricultural regime dominated most of the land in the *oikoumene* correlates with the ideal of Greek *polis* life – for a citizen to own a plot of land and live off its produce (Xen. *Oec.* 4.2-4, 5.17; Plut. *Per.* 16.3-5). Farming and animal husbandry were, along with seafaring, central to Greek daily life.⁸⁶ Each *polis* had an urban centre, but the majority of its territory was rural. Many of the citizens spent their days tilling fields of cereals, vines and olives in the countryside. As Aristotle explains, τὸ δὲ πλεῖστον γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ζῆ καὶ τῶν ἡμέρων καρπῶν (“The largest class of men make a living from the land and its cultivated produce” – Arist. *Pol.* 1256a39-40). Greek *poleis* were paradigms of the *oikoumene* as arable land. As part of their inclusion in the *oikoumene*, the Greeks also associated regions inhabited by non-Greeks with the agricultural regime. Herodotus highlights the immense agricultural fecundity of several such regions, notably Mesopotamia nourished by the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, and Egypt by the river Nile (Hdt. 1.193.1-5, 2.13.2 – 2.14.2, 2.177.1-2). His explanation of Aristagoras’ map, moreover, enumerates the abundance of crops, livestock and material wealth to be found in the Persian Empire between Sardis and Susa (Hdt. 5.49-5-8).⁸⁷ In the *Anabasis*, Xenophon uses the phrase πόλις οἰκουμένη to define both Greek and Persian-controlled settlements encountered during the Greek mercenary army’s march toward Cunaxa on the river Euphrates (Xen. *An.* 1.2.6-7, 2.4.27-28). The phrase insinuates that a site of habitation is politically organised and its land agriculturally productive, making it valuable to the mercenaries in their bid for survival in hostile territories.⁸⁸ The *poleis oikoumenai* contrast with uncultivated, barren spaces (ἐρημοί) that are objects of fear and anxiety amongst Xenophon’s men (Xen. *An.* 2.5.9).⁸⁹

The *eschatiai*, although they had some arable land, were unusual in that they also contained a greater proportion of *eremoi* than the rest of the *oikoumene*. The Greeks delineated the nature of human habitation within the *eschatiai* by the use of both the words οἰκουμένη (Hdt. 2.32.3-5, 3.106.2, 3.114.1, 4.110.2) and ἐρημος (Hdt. 2.32.1-7, 3.98.2, 4.40.2, 4.185.1-3). Significant portions of the *eschatiai*, areas like the

⁸⁶ For discussion of ancient Greek agriculture and pastoralism, see Hanson (1995) 1-4, 15, 42; Greaves (2002) 15-16; Rhodes (2010) 106-108.

⁸⁷ For analysis of the agrarian, economic focus to Herodotus’ explanation of the map, see Heidel (1937) 52-53; Janni (1984) 44-45; Wilford (2002) 11; Munn (2006) 217-219; Harrison (2007) 44-48; Branscome (2010) 1-44.

⁸⁸ For analysis of the meaning of the phrase, see esp. Tuplin (2004) 166-168, 181; Munn (2006) 195; Roy (2007) 67.

⁸⁹ On the meaning of ἐρημοί in Greek geography, see Hartog (1988) 11-13; Romm (1992) 35-36; Zingross (1998) 30, 53; Dueck (2012) 4-5.

Sahara Desert, Thar Desert and Pontic Steppe, were typecast as *eremoi* and barriers to normal settled society. When discussing Scythia, Herodotus separates the grain-growing, sedentary tribes inhabiting arable lands from the nomadic hunter-gatherer tribes who do not sow crops, inhabiting terrains bare of plant life (Hdt. 4.19.1, 4.110.2). This portrayal of the Scythian *eremoi* as home to mobile nomadism accords with the Greeks' broader view of the *eschatiai* as lands where sedentary lifestyle is not as natural as it is in the other parts of the *oikoumene*. The Greeks believed nomadism to be endemic to Scythia especially (Aesch. *PV*, 707-709; Ephorus, *FGrH* 70, F 42, *ap.* Strabo 7.3.9), but also knew of nomads living in Ethiopia and India who wandered near to sandy, arid deserts (Hdt. 3.98.3, 4.186.1). They viewed nomads as alien to the normal agricultural regime of the *oikoumene*, exemplified by Greek *polis* life. Nomads were comparable to the mythical Cyclopes, whom Homer separates from the world of men due to their ignorance of farming, animal husbandry and seafaring (Hom. *Od.* 9.116-130).⁹⁰ There was perhaps some recognition by the Greeks that nomadism is a sophisticated response to barren soils and extreme climatic conditions (Hdt. 4.46.2-3). A few of the primary sources show great respect for the nomads of the *eschatiai*. It is nomadic Scythians, for example, whom Ephorus admires for their commitment to justice, frugality and freedom (Ephorus, *FGrH* 70, F 42, *ap.* Strabo 7.3.9).⁹¹

Conclusion

The concept of the *eschatiai* encompassed the lands and peoples occupying the edges of the *oikoumene*. These “extremities” were remote from the Greeks, who were sporadically scattered around and interconnected by the Mediterranean Sea at the centre of the *oikoumene*. Geographical remoteness, extreme natural environments, and the nature of human habitation distinguished the *eschatiai* from the rest of the *oikoumene*. The agrarian society and economy that was the norm throughout *Hellas* and many non-Greek lands was less widespread in the *eschatiai*, where nomads roamed extensively. Greek opinions on culture and society in the *eschatiai* cut across a broad spectrum,

⁹⁰ See Shaw (1982/83) 5-31; Hartog (1988) 11; Georges (1994) 3-4; Burkert (2004) 1; Munn (2006) 188-195; Skinner (2012) 60-61.

⁹¹ See also Hdt. 9.122.3 where Cyrus the Great explains some of the cultural benefits resulting from the Persian homeland's harsh environment and nomadic heritage, contrasting with the negative influence of more productive soils in neighbouring lands; cf. Hippoc. *Aer.* 24.40-67: this passage offers the same environmentally determinist perspective that impoverished lands produce strong, courageous, intelligent and autonomous men, while fertile lands produce unintelligent, lazy and cowardly men.

largely disconnected from the Self versus Other dichotomy of geographical ethnocentrism, a worldview that has been persistently attributed to the ancient Greeks. They, for the most part, did not grade the cultures of the *oikoumene* on the basis of geographic centrality and marginality. The decision to place themselves at the centre of the *oikoumene* was rooted in the notion that Greek civilisation straddled the Europe-Asia and Europe-Libya divides, and occupied a median latitudinal position in the temperate zone. Also influential was the way in which the Greeks catalogued places and peoples in succession moving outward from a particular Greek locale, which functioned as a central point of reference.

The next chapter of the thesis begins the discussion of how the continents became involved in the process of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. It analyses the earliest socio-cultural and geopolitical connotations conferred upon the continental system by its architects, Anaximander and Hecataeus.

The Genesis of the Continental System in Ancient Greek Geographical Thought and its Associations with Ethno-cultural Identity Construction

German classicist Christian Meier, in one of his latest monographs *A Culture of Freedom: Ancient Greece and the Origins of Europe* (2012), asserts that the continents Europe, Asia and Libya were fundamental building blocks of ancient Greek geography. He states that the continental system presumes an *oikoumene* “neither understood nor divided from a perspective of Greek centrality,” diverging from the culturally hierarchical centre versus periphery binaries conceived by the Egyptians, Babylonians, and other ancient peoples.¹ My analysis in the previous chapter highlights that the notion of Greek centrality in the *oikoumene* was in fact a staple of ancient Greek geographic thought that coexisted with the continental system. The sources indicate, however, that this Hellenocentrism was primarily driven by a variety of factors unrelated to ethnocentric prejudice. On the subject of the continents, Meier argues that at the turn of the fifth century BC, Greek military conflict with Persia imbued the Europe-Asia divide with chauvinistic meaning. Ancient Greek historians cast the Persian Wars as a contest between Persians in Asia and Greeks in Europe. As part of the lore, the continental divide between Asia and Europe came to symbolise the cultural antithesis of barbarian and Greek, East and West.² Meier’s perspective on the Greek continental system draws upon the modern concepts of the Other and Orient, and the theory of an ongoing cultural clash between East and West dating back to antiquity. The same perspective is shared by many other scholars of ancient Greek geography and ethnography.³ A few speculate further that the conceptual synonymy of Asia/Europe, barbarian/Greek, East/West may have originated before the Persian Wars in the work of Anaximander and Hecataeus.⁴ This chapter commences a revision of the scholarly

¹ Meier (2012) 24-26 reasons that the division of the *oikoumene* into continents was inconsistent with the view of someone looking out at the world from their own *polis*, and instead indicative of someone who is well-travelled and not tied to one location.

² Meier (2012) 26-28, 37.

³ See Hay (1957) 2-3; W. H. Parker (1960) 278; Said (1978) 54-57; E. Hall (1989) 75-76, 99; de Romilly (1992) 2; Coleman (1997) 188; Mikkeli (1998) 7; Kaplan (1999) 11-13, 20-22, 34; Hartog (2001) 81-82; Guerrina (2002) 2-3; Pagden (2002) 35-36; Alonso-Núñez (2003) 147; Brosius (2006) 76; Munn (2006) 181: n. 7, 225, 233; Mitchell (2007) 58-62; Pagden (2008) x-xvii; Price and Thonemann (2010) 116-117; Kim (2013) 30.

⁴ Coleman (1997) 188; Kaplan (1999) 11-13, 20-22, 34; Munn (2006) 181: n. 7, 225, 233; Mitchell (2007) 58-62.

narrative on the ancient Greek continental system. It investigates the Greeks' earliest known hypotheses of an *oikoumene* that is partitioned into continents, attributed to the lost maps and fragmentary treatises of Anaximander and Hecataeus. The first section of the chapter analyses the ancient Greek definition of the continent, revealing that it was viewed from a maritime perspective as a large terrestrial mass contoured by the sea. This maritime perspective is illustrated by the evolution of the geographical toponyms Εὐρώπη, Ἀσία, and Λιβύη from coastal mainland regions inhabited by Greeks to the names of continents. The second section examines the formulation and early development of the Greek continental system. It explores the rationales behind both the bipartite and tripartite configurations, and the different dynamics involved in the demarcation of continental boundary lines. The third and final section assesses the extent to which Anaximander and Hecataeus may have associated the continents with the concept of *Hellas* and Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. The mainstream dogma that Asia and Europe functioned as allegories for barbarian and Greek, East and West is shown to be problematic. The application of modern theoretical paradigms – the Other and the Orient – has overshadowed how the ancient Greeks themselves viewed the continents.

The Ancient Greek Definition of the Continent

The modern idea of what constitutes a continent is protean. There is no consensus regarding how many continents exist and the criteria determining their identification. One of the most familiar systems divides the world into seven continents: Antarctica, Australia, Asia, Europe, Africa, North America and South America. Some accepted alternatives include Oceania/Australasia (combining Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands), the Americas (combining North America and South America), Eurasia (combining Europe and Asia), and Afro-Eurasia (combining Europe, Asia and Africa). Lewis and Wigen point out that the arbitrary nature of the continent's definition has been inherited from the ancient Greeks:

In contemporary usage, continents are understood to be large, continuous, discrete masses of land, ideally separated by expanses of water. Although of ancient origin, this convention is both historically unstable and surprisingly

unexamined; the required size and the requisite degree of physical separation have never been defined.⁵

That excerpt from *The Myth of Continents* echoes the thinking of Herodotus some 2,500 years earlier (Hdt. 4.45.2):

οὐδ' ἔχω συμβαλέσθαι ἐπ' ὅτεν μὴ εἴσῃ γῆ οὐνόματα τριφάσια
κέεται ἐπωνυμίας ἔχοντα γυναικῶν, καὶ οὐρίσματα αὐτῇ Νεῖλός τε ὁ
Αἰγύπτιος ποταμὸς ἐτέθη καὶ Φᾶσις ὁ Κόλχος [οἱ δὲ Τάναιιν
ποταμὸν τὸν Μαιήτην καὶ πορθμήια τὰ Κιμμέρια λέγουσι].

I cannot guess for what reason the earth, which is one, has three names, of women, and why the boundary lines established for it [the earth] are the Egyptian river Nile and the Colchian river Phasis, while some say the Maeotian river Tanais and the Cimmerian Bosphorus [the Kerch Strait].

Herodotus notes that from a technical geographical standpoint the three known continents are contiguous, forming one single landmass. The boundary lines chosen to partition the landmass into smaller units of space are, therefore, artificial and subjective. The extant source tradition of ancient Greek geography lacks an explicit explanation of the intrinsic features that were believed to define a continent, namely size, physical composition and boundary lines. Insight into the matter is provided by the word that the Greeks used to mean “continent,” and the specific contexts in which it appears. There is also reason to consider how the Greeks depicted Europe, Asia and Libya, ascertaining the main similarities among these spaces that determine their analogous designation as continents.

The ancient Greek word for continent was ἡπειρος. Derived from the adjective ἄπειρος meaning “limitless,” ἡπειρος could also be used in a narrower sense to denote a mainland region. Clever word play in a fragment of Euripides substantiates this derivation: ἡπειρον εἰς ἄπειρον ἐκβάλλων πόδα (“striking out on foot to the limitless mainland” – Eur. F 1010, *ap. schol. Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.71 = Collard and Cropp). The

⁵ Lewis and Wigen (1997) 21: these authors apply a deconstructuralist approach to geography. They argue that although dividing the world into geographical units, such as continents, is convenient, it does not do justice to the complexities of global physical geography and leads to faulty comparisons.

notion of a mainland as limitless conceptually set it apart from circumscribed islands. Alongside its well-known application to the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula, ἡπειρος defined Asia Minor as a mainland distinguished from adjacent Aegean islands, notably Samos and Chios (Aesch. *Pers.* 42-43; Hdt. 1.27.1, 1.96.1, 1.148.1, 1.171.2, 6.31.1; Thuc. 1.5.1-3).⁶ The division of the earth's land into mainlands and islands stems from a maritime perspective rooted in the Greek *periplus* tradition, whereby a seafarer sights and catalogues lands consecutively along the route travelled by his ship.⁷ An island was recognised as such by the ability of a seafarer to circumnavigate it, whereas a mainland was a region only partially bordered by water. A mainland's outline was unable to be entirely mapped out from aboard a ship, as it extended inland at the fringe of a larger landmass. Εὐρώπη, Ἀσία, and Λιβύη began life as names for sectors of land which were part of coastal mainlands. As the Greeks gradually gained more and more information about places far inland of the Mediterranean coastlines, these names evolved to become referents for entire continents. The continents were vast landmasses that spread outward from the Mediterranean and an initial coastal mainland. To an even greater extent than mainlands, they appeared limitless – the Greeks frequently contrasted them with small islands (Soph. *Captive Women*, F 39, *ap.* Steph. Byz. 287 = Lloyd-Jones; Eur. *Ion*, 1574-1588; Xen. *An.* 7.1.27).

The evolution of ἡπειρος to mean continent, as well as mainland, presumably coincided with the Greeks' creation of the continental system.⁸ The continental sense of the word is not extant in the fragmentary primary source material of the architects of the continents, Anaximander and Hecataeus. There is one fragment of Hecataeus' geographical treatise, however, where ἡπειρος refers to a regional mainland (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 26, *ap.* Arr. *Anab.* 2.16.5). The array of far-flung peoples and places amassed together in the books "On Europe" and "On Asia" suggests that the continent was an incipient concept at this time. The meaning of ἡπειρος as continent is first extant in Pindar's ninth Pythian ode, dedicated to Telesicrates of Cyrene who won the hoplite race at the Pythian Games in 474 BC. In the ode, Pindar employs the Doric dialect form of the word to describe Libya, in juxtaposition with Europe and Asia, as the

⁶ Another word used to describe this particular area of land was περσία. The word literally meant "place opposite" – i.e. the place lying opposite the Aegean islands: see Malkin (2011) 48.

⁷ See Clarke (1999) 206; Malkin (2011) 48. Constantakopoulou (2007) 11-12, 16-18 argues that the ancient Greeks considered mainlands and islands to embody two different types of worlds, which had important cultural differences from one another.

⁸ For discussion of ἡπειρος as "continent," see LSJ (1940) s.v. ἡπειρος: 776; Georgacas (1969) 1-10; Malkin (2011) 48; Dueck (2012) 79.

ἀπείρου τρίτον (“third continent” – Pind. *Pyth.* 9.8). In the same decade, Aeschylus associates the continental usage of ἡπειρος with Asia. In the *Persians*, Queen Atossa replies to the Ghost of Darius’ question regarding which one of his sons led the Persians to war against the Greeks: Θούριος Ξέρξης, κενώσας πᾶσαν ἡπείρου πλάκα (“Impetuous Xerxes, emptying the whole surface of the continent” – Aesch. *Pers.* 718).⁹ Atossa suggests in this statement that Xerxes had drastically depopulated the Asian continent by driving his enormous army across the Hellespont and into peril, an army which consisted of a myriad of national contingents from as far afield as Bactria and India. Passages such as this one imply that an impression of immense size was critical to the definition of the continent. The emergence of the concept thus had to accord with substantial increases in Greek geographic data about the parts of the *oikoumene* far removed from the Mediterranean and the initial coastal mainlands of Europe, Asia and Libya. The Greeks first acquired reliable and detailed information about these parts during extensive exploratory activity in the sixth century BC. The fragments of Hecataeus’ geographical treatise, compiled toward the close of that century, represent a major improvement upon the geographic material found in earlier works, like the Homeric epics. Homer’s knowledge did not reach much beyond the Greek mainland, and the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean coastlines. Hecataeus, meanwhile, recorded information on various distant regions, including those inhabited by the Celts, Medians, Indians and Libyan nomads (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 18a, 38, 55, 286, 294, 295, 334, *ap. schol. Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.259; Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἐλιβύργη, Μασσαλία, Μηδία, Γανδάραι, Κασπάπυρος, Μάζυες).

Long-distance travel and exploration in the sixth century BC contributed to a comprehensive overhaul of Greek knowledge of the *oikoumene*, prompting the development of the continent as a geographic concept. Greek geographic horizons were expanded by the Phoenician circumnavigation of Africa at the behest of King Necho of Egypt (Hdt. 4.42.2-4); Colaeus of Samos’ voyage to Tartessus (Hdt. 4.152.1-4); and the journeys of both Democedes of Croton (Hdt. 3.129.3) and Demaratus of Sparta (Hdt. 7.3.1) throughout Persia, as members of the courts of Darius I and Xerxes I. One of the most important expeditions was embarked upon by Scylax of Caryanda. Under the instruction of Darius I, he travelled to India, sailed down the river Indus and skirted the

⁹ Cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 737: The Ghost of Darius speaking to Atossa – καὶ πρὸς ἡπειρον σεσῶσθαι τήνδε, τοῦτ’ ἐτήτυμον; (“Has he [Xerxes] come safely to this continent, is this true?”); see also Aesch. *PV*, 735, 790.

southern coast of Asia as far as Suez. Herodotus says that as a result primarily of Scylax's endeavours τῆς δὲ Ἀσίας τὰ πολλὰ ὑπὸ Δαρείου ἐξευρέθη ("the greater part of Asia was discovered by Darius" – Hdt. 4.44.1-3). The Greek perception of Asia at this point in time drew upon some first-hand observations of the continental interior. There is evidence of Ionian craftsmen participating in the construction of Achaemenid royal palaces at Susa, Persepolis and Pasargadae.¹⁰ In these circumstances, the Greeks began to understand the truly colossal size of the landmasses that extended away from the Mediterranean Sea. The increased land area was the fundamental aspect differentiating the meaning of ἡπειρος as continent from its meaning as mainland. The maritime perspective that dominated the delineation of a mainland still remained vital, as the closest and most familiar sections of Europe, Asia and Libya were the Mediterranean seaboard of the initial mainlands. Milesian seafarers are assumed to have supplied a lot of the raw geographic and ethnographic data for the maps of Anaximander and Hecataeus. In their *periploi*, they may have described Europe as the portion of the *oikoumene* reached by sailing north and west; Libya by sailing south and west; and Asia by sailing homeward.¹¹ The nautical part of the continent's definition also affected the boundary lines chosen. The boundaries between Europe, Asia and Libya were usually comprised by the Mediterranean, Aegean and Euxine, along with rivers and water passages adjoining the seas (Hdt. 4.45.2). These water passages separated the terrestrial continents from one another and from all the islands lying offshore of each.

In the ancient Greek imagination, Europe, Asia and Libya were popularly believed to derive from the names of mythological women. Herodotus, though, provides an analysis of the onomastics, in which he disputes this explanation. He argues that it is unknown from where exactly the names of the continents come or the identities of those who coined them (Hdt. 4.45.1-5). In ancient Greek geography and cartography, these appellations, in combination with various others, enabled the cogent and intelligible compartmentalisation of the geographical space in the *oikoumene*. They provided

¹⁰ On the great expansion in Greek knowledge of the *oikoumene* as Greek movement beyond the Mediterranean coastlines increased during the sixth century BC, see Heidel (1937) 48; Brown (1973) 8; Boardman (1980) 34-35, 99, 153-154; Cook (1983) 14; Karttunen (1989) 48-50; Burkert (1992) 11; Brosius (2006) 20; Dueck (2012) 10.

¹¹ Toynbee (1954) 710-711 argues that the pairing of Europe and Asia as physiographical expressions must have been brought into currency by navigators of the Aegean and Mediterranean as they became aware of the limitations set by *terra firma* to their freedom of movement upon the sea. The Mediterranean coasts of Europe and Asia (and conceivably Libya too) represented the bounds to their seafaring adventures.

relatable points of reference that differentiated land from sea, and places and peoples from one another. Assigning names to the continents was especially pragmatic because they represented the largest individual geographical spaces identified, and were essential to the Greeks' determination of the overall structure and orientation of the *oikoumene*. The Greeks most likely adapted the toponym Λιβύη, referring to the continent now called Africa, from the indigenous ethnonym *Libu*. This ethnonym is attested in Egyptian records from the thirteenth century BC, describing a tribe native to coastal North Africa.¹² The earliest appearance of Λιβύη as a place name in ancient Greek literature is in Homer's *Odyssey*. It corresponds approximately with the Egyptian usage in terms of geography, denoting a fertile pastoral region situated in coastal North Africa, west of Egypt. Menelaus is said to have visited Libya during his return homeward from Troy (Hom. *Od.* 4.85, 9.95, 23.311). Greeks hailing from the island of Thera founded the colony of Cyrene in the same region in c. 630 BC. Libya subsequently became intimately connected with Cyrene and the borders of its surrounding territory. It has proved difficult to ascertain when exactly the Greeks first expanded the meaning of Λιβύη to incorporate the entire continent. After Pindar's mention of Libya as the "third continent," the next surviving reference to it as a continental landmass is in Herodotus' *Histories*. Herodotus observes that some Greek mapmakers portray Libya as a continent, informed by the Phoenician circumnavigation, which proved that Libya was a large terrestrial mass surrounded almost entirely by water (Hdt. 4.42.2-4).

The advent of Εὐρώπη as a geographical toponym in extant Greek literature is found in the *Homeric Hymn to Delian Apollo*. In the hymn, Apollo outlines a plan to situate his premier temple at Delphi (*Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 287-292):

ἐνθάδε δὴ φρονέω τεῦξαι περικαλλέα νηὸν
 ἔμμεναι ἀνθρώποις χρηστήριον, οἷτε μοι αἰεὶ
 ἐνθάδ' ἀγινήσουσι τεληέσσας ἑκατόμβας,
 ἡμὲν ὅσοι Πελοπόννησον πείριαν ἔχουσιν,
 ἦδ' ὅσοι Εὐρώπην τε καὶ ἀμφιρύτας κατὰ νήσους,
 χρησόμενοι.

¹² Stewart (1975) 191 asserts that the ancient Greeks frequently embraced and adapted aboriginal toponyms. As in the case of *Libu*, they assumed that every place already had a name, and that their responsibility was to discover this name and utilise it themselves.

At this very place, I intend to construct a beautiful temple
as an oracle for men, and always
here they will bring to me perfect hecatombs,
both those who hold the plentiful Peloponnese,
and those who hold Europe and also the wave-washed isles,
coming to consult me.

As with Libya initially, Europe here denotes a specific littoral land inhabited by Greeks. Its location is related to other well-defined geographical spaces, namely the Peloponnese and nearby Aegean islands. There have been several different suggestions for the precise whereabouts for this regional Europe, including Dodona in Epirus; a plain in Thessaly; the plain of Emathia in Macedonia; the northern Aegean coastline; and Thrace.¹³ The plain of Emathia, the northern Aegean coastline, and Thrace, all of which lie outside mainland Greece and are predominantly inhabited by non-Greeks, can be dismissed. The hymn clearly groups Europe, the Peloponnese and the “wave-washed isles” together as parts of the Greek world, in which Delphi, by drawing people together in the cult worship of Apollo, is a centripetal hub of interconnectivity. In order to complete a frame around Delphi along with the Peloponnese and the “wave-washed isles,” Europe should accord with the area of mainland Greece stretching north and west of Delphi. The noun Εὐρώπη possibly derives from the adjective εὐρωπαϊός. Its meaning, “broad-faced,” correlates with the way in which northern Greece widens out between the east coast and west coast after the much narrower confines of Attica, Boeotia and Aetolia.¹⁴ The earliest reference to Europe as a continent extending far beyond northern Greece is the title “On Europe,” which Hecataeus uses for one of the books in his *Periodos Ges*.

One alternative hypothesis for the origin of Εὐρώπη is that it entered into the Greek language from the Semitic Assyrian-Phoenician root *ereb*, meaning “sunset/west.” Accordingly, Εὐρώπη had an in-built geographic juxtaposition with the

¹³ W. H. Parker (1960) 278 argues in favour of the northern Aegean coastline: “When first mentioned by the Greeks, Europe appears as the land along the north shore of the Aegean and is distinguished from Greece proper”; Lukermann (1961a) 271 disagrees, positing that Europe is demarcated in relation to Delphi and refers to one of three limited areas: the area of Dodona in Epirus, a plain in Thessaly, or the plain of Emathia in Macedonia; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 22 prefer to equate Europe with the non-Greek realm of Thrace.

¹⁴ Toynbee (1954) 710-711.

toponym ᾿Ασία, which originated from the Assyrian-Phoenician *acu*, meaning “sunrise/east, and designated a region lying on the opposite (eastern) side of the Aegean Sea to Εὐρώπη.¹⁵ Many scholars find this proposed etymology unconvincing. They point out that any abstract segregation of the lands bordering either side of the Aegean Sea would be inconsistent with a Phoenician worldview articulated from and orientated in relation to their homeland in the Levant.¹⁶ The idea that Europe and Asia, before being recognised as continents, were defined via antithesis to one another also lacks a basis in the ancient Greek source tradition. Another school of thought suggests that the Greek word ᾿Ασία was ultimately a translation of the Luwian word *Assuwa*. The word is found in Hittite diplomatic records of the Late Bronze Age and on Linear B tablets from mainland Greece and Crete. In official letters of the Hittite court, *Assuwa* defines a league of twenty-two tribes located at the Hittite Empire’s edge in western Anatolia. The correspondence renders *Assuwa* as a rebellious province of the Hittites.¹⁷ Homer supplies the first extant use of ᾿Ασία in ancient Greek literature. In the *Iliad*, the adjectival form of the word describes an area of countryside near the central coast of western Anatolia. It is in the vicinity of the river Caystrius, which rose in Mount Tmolus close to the Lydian cities of Sardis and Hypaepa (Hom. *Il.* 2.461). Several sources from the Archaic period identify ᾿Ασία with either the central coast of western Anatolia where the Ionian Greeks lived, or more broadly with the whole Anatolian Peninsula (Alcm. F 23.2, *ap. POxy.* 2387 = Campbell; Archil. F 227, *ap. schol. Hom. Od.* 15.534 = Gerber; Mimnermus, F 9, *ap. Strabo* 14.1.4 = Gerber; Sappho, F 44, *ap. POxy.* 1232 = Campbell). The Roman province of *Asia* later resided in Anatolia, comprised by the Troad, Mysia, Aeolis, Ionia, Lydia, Caria, Pisidia, Phrygia and Pamphylia. ᾿Ασία, like Εὐρώπη, is first confirmed as the name of an entire continent in a book title of Hecataeus’ *Periodos Ges*. Even once the continental usage predominated, ᾿Ασία could still be employed concurrently to describe Anatolia only (Pind. *Ol.* 7.19; Hdt. 1.79.3).

¹⁵ See Lyde (1917) 6-7; W. H. Parker (1960) 278; Stewart (1975) 210; Mikkeli (1998) 3; Guerrina (2002) 2-3; Romm (2010) 216-217.

¹⁶ For arguments against the derivation of Εὐρώπη from the Assyrian-Phoenician *ereb*, and ᾿Ασία from the Assyrian-Phoenician *acu*, see Toynbee (1954) 711-712; Hay (1957) 1-2; Lukermann (1961a) 270-272; Georgacas (1969) 38, 44-48; Steadman (1969) 45; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 214: n. 3; Kaplan (1999) 11-13, 22, 34; Gunter (2009) 51.

¹⁷ On the possibility that *Assuwa* was the root of ᾿Ασία, see Forrer (1932); Toynbee (1954) 710-711; Cook (1962) 20; Georgacas (1969) 33, 48, 56; Steadman (1969) 45; Bernal (1987-91, vol. 1) 233-234; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 215; Bryce (1998) 136, 342-343; Kaplan (1999) 4-9; Morris (2001) 135; Crielaard (2009) 42.

The analysis in this section has shown that the ancient Greek view of the continent evolved out of the concept of a regional, coastal mainland. The word for mainland, ἡπειρος, implied the maritime perspective of a seafarer, distinguishing a terrestrial space with large littoral sections from the sea and islands lying offshore. When ἡπειρος came to mean “continent” also, it retained these maritime connotations. It additionally defined the continent as a terrestrial mass of much greater size than a mainland, one that extended continuously and considerably away from the Mediterranean coastline. The invention of the continent was a reaction to significant advances in Greek knowledge of places inland of the Mediterranean during the sixth century BC. The continents, parted from one another by nautical boundaries, were the largest individual geographical spaces of the *oikoumene*. The ancient Greek names for the known continents, Εὐρώπη, Ἀσία and Λιβύη, were chosen because they were all already names given to sectors of the coastal mainlands, populated by Greek *poleis*, at the fringes of the landmasses.

The next section of the chapter discusses the origins of the ancient Greek continental system, associated with the lost maps and fragmentary treatises of Anaximander and Hecataeus. It investigates whether they are likely to have favoured a bipartite or tripartite continental configuration, and how they chose to demarcate the continental boundary lines.

Creating a Continental System for World Geography

There is general agreement that Anaximander of Miletus invented the concept of continents, but the source tradition is silent on the timeline and circumstances. It can be assumed that Anaximander drew his lost map of the world, depicting the continental system, at the height of his career in the mid-sixth century BC. In c. 500 BC, Hecataeus produced his own improved cartographic design (Strabo 1.1.11; Agathemerus, 1.1; Diog. Laert. 2.1-2). Since none of the Milesians’ cartographic or literary output is fully extant, we are reliant on the testimony of later authors, especially Herodotus, to help evaluate how Anaximander and Hecataeus rendered the continents. Some of the information provided is difficult to interpret. When discussing early Greek cartography, Herodotus refers to the mapmakers by a number of ambiguous terms and phrases, including “Ionians” (Hdt. 2.16.1). Neither Anaximander nor Hecataeus are at any point

mentioned by name. As a result, there is dispute about whether “Ionians” designates them or instead other mapmakers from Ionia, perhaps contemporaries of Herodotus unknown to us. The lack of explicit citation of sources was common practice in ancient Greek historiography. Further complicating the matter is that Herodotus’ vagueness relates to two different schools of thought about the configuration of the continental system. Some mapmakers supported a bipartite configuration comprised of Europe and Asia, with Libya subsumed into the latter – not a continent in its own right (Hdt. 4.36.2). Others, notably Herodotus’ “Ionians,” supported a tripartite configuration comprised of Europe, Asia and Libya (Hdt. 2.16.1-2, 4.45.2).¹⁸ Establishing which of the continental configurations Anaximander and Hecataeus preferred is, in large part, a speculative endeavour. With only a patchy accumulation of ancient evidence to draw upon, it has been necessary to extrapolate from what is known about the state of Ionian geographic knowledge in the sixth century BC. Herodotus outlines the bipartite configuration when criticising earlier mapmakers who have drawn world maps with a perfectly circular, symmetrical *oikoumene*, surrounded by an outer ocean and consisting of Europe and Asia, two continents equal in size (Hdt. 4.36.2). The architects of these maps are clearly distinct from Herodotus’ “Ionians,” and are often identified as Anaximander and Hecataeus. Without any contextual detail provided by Herodotus, it is the partition of Hecataeus’ *Periodos Ges* into “On Europe” and “On Asia” which most suggests that he and Anaximander divided the *oikoumene* by way of two continents, Europe in the north and Asia in the south.¹⁹ The incorporation of the Libyan landmass into Asia is hinted by the presence in “On Asia” of information about peoples and places along the North African coast (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 334, *ap.* Steph. Byz. s.v. Μάζυες). In Greek geography and cartography of the Classical period, the bipartite configuration coexisted with the tripartite. The bipartite configuration appears in the works of all three great Athenian tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.²⁰ It

¹⁸ For the view that the “Ionians” are Anaximander and Hecataeus, see Engels (1999) 11; Hahn (2001) 210; Naddaf (2003) 49-55; for the alternate view that the “Ionians” are unknown mapmakers contemporary with Herodotus, see Lewis and Wigen (1997) 21; Thomas (2000) 79-81, 92-93; Couprie (2003) 194-196; Munn (2006) 179-180.

¹⁹ For discussion of this evidence, see Pearson (1939) 31, 61-62; Berger (1964) 164-165; Dilke (1985) 23-24, 56-57; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 21; Couprie (2003) 194-196; Munn (2006) 179-180; Romm (2010) 217.

²⁰ See esp. Aesch. *Pers.* 67-68, 799; *PV*, 807-812; Soph. *Trach.* 100-101; Soph. F 881, *ap.* schol. M Aesch. *Pers.* 181 = Lloyd-Jones; Eur. *Ion*, 1574-1588; Eur. *Pirithous*, F 1, *ap.* Clem. Al. *Strom.* 5.14.114.2 = Collard and Cropp.

acts as an interpretative framework for the environmentally determinist viewpoints of Hippocrates and Aristotle (Hippoc. *Aer.* 12.10-45, 16.3-43; Arist. *Pol.* 1327b18-33).

Both the bipartite and tripartite continental configurations construed Europe and Asia as two immense spans of *terra firma*, situated across the waters from one another. The Europe-Asia divide was comprised principally by the continuous water passage stretching all the way from the Pillars of Heracles to the east coast of the Euxine (Aesch. *Pers.* 66-67, 722-723; *PV*, 790; Hdt. 4.36.2 – 4.45.2). Mark Munn explains that the focal area of the boundary line ran from the Aegean Sea to the Bosphorus:

The only self-evident physical division between the continents of Asia and Europe is that formed by the waters of the Bosphorus, Propontis (Sea of Marmara), Hellespont (Dardanelles), and the Aegean Sea. Every other notion of the extent and confines of Asia and of Europe proceeds by extension from this primary zone of demarcation.²¹

For the division to be “self-evident,” a Greek standing on the European side of the Hellespont (or the Bosphorus also) would have had to perceive the water lying in front of them as constituting a conspicuous natural barrier, which separated the soil on which they stood from the land opposite, visible on the horizon. Other considerations may have compelled Anaximander and Hecataeus to view the boundary differently, however. Hecataeus’ fragments indicate that his geographic knowledge extended well into the lands of Scythia and Colchis, and even farther throughout the northeast of the *oikoumene*.²² He would have known, like Herodotus did, that Europe and Asia were technically one contiguous landmass beyond the Euxine (Hdt. 4.45.2). With that awareness in mind, the continuous water passage was hardly “self-evident”; instead, it was an artificially selected and convenient continental divider.

The extension of the Europe-Asia divide beyond the Euxine in the east was an equally subjective undertaking, with two rivers, the Phasis in Colchis and the Tanais in Scythia, alternatively integrated into the divide (Hdt. 4.45.2).²³ These rivers were two of

²¹ Munn (2006) 180.

²² See esp. Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 18a, 18b, 195, 289, 291, *ap. schol. Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.259, 4.284; *ps.-Scymn.* 865-867; *Steph. Byz.* s.v. Μύκοι; *Ath.* 2.70a.

²³ On the debate in the primary sources about whether the Phasis or the Tanais should complete the continental divide between Europe and Asia, see W. H. Parker (1960) 278; Berger (1964) 164-165; Aujac (1987a) 136; Gardiner-Garden (1987) 13-17, 53; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 21-27; Zingross (1998) 15-17; Thomas (2000) 75-101; Munn (2006) 179-188; Harrison (2007) 46-51; Romm (2010) 216-219.

many in the northeast of the *oikoumene* that flowed into the Euxine or its tributary, Lake Maeotis (Sea of Azov). In terms of their basic physical properties (length, width and volume), the Phasis and Tanais were not so extraordinary that they would stand out from nearby rivers, such as the Dnieper and the Kura. Flanked by these and the many other navigable rivers in the region, they were less obvious as dividers of continents than the seas and straits that formed the remainder of the water passage. The choice of either the Phasis or the Tanais as part of the Europe-Asia divide may reflect that they were comparatively well-known to the Greeks, each having a Milesian colony situated at its mouth. Furthermore, both were normally imagined to join up with the outer ocean, ensuring that the continental water passage completed a continuous route across the entire length of the *oikoumene*. The river Phasis, as its modern counterpart the Rioni does today, had its headwaters in the southern Caucasus Mountains and flowed west into the southeast corner of the Euxine. Herodotus amalgamated the Phasis with another river, the Araxes (Aras), which flowed east into the Caspian Sea (Hdt. 1.202.1-4, 1.205.4, 4.11.1, 4.40.1).²⁴ It is widely believed that ancient Greek geographers, except for Herodotus and Claudius Ptolemy, envisioned the Caspian to be a gulf of the outer ocean, unaware that it was an entirely landlocked sea (Hdt. 1.203.1; Ptol. *Geog.* 7.5.4).²⁵ The Phasis-Araxes was estimated to flow along a roughly east-to-west axis between the Euxine and the Caspian. This projected course made the river suited for integration into the bipartite continental boundary, with Europe lying to its north and Asia to its south (Hdt. 4.36.2). Aeschylus, for instance, identifies the Phasis as the δίδυμον χθονὸς Εὐρώπης/ μέγαν ἥδ' Ἀσίας τέρμονα (“great twofold boundary of the soil of Europe and Asia” – Aesch. *Prometheus Unbound*, F 106, *ap. Arr. Peripl. M. Eux.* 19.2 =

²⁴ In the passages cited, Herodotus merges the Phasis with the Araxes, and the Araxes with either the Oxus (Amu-Darya) or the Jaxartes. The Greeks thought that both of these rivers flowed into the Caspian from the east. They, in fact, flow into the Aral Sea, a body of water that seems to have been unknown to the Greeks, even after the campaigns of Alexander the Great: see Tarn (1901) 13: n. 3; Thomson (1948) 80; Tozer (1964) 82; Hamilton (1971) 110.

²⁵ McPhail and Hannah (2008-11) 155-172 contest this scholarly orthodoxy, arguing that the evidence marshalled to connect Hecataeus and later Eratosthenes with the dominant gulf theory is sketchy at best. Some uncertainty about Hecataeus' support for the gulf theory has previously been voiced: see Junge (1939) 24; van Paassen (1957) 143, 383; Lukermann (1961a) 271. For a sample of the work contributing to the dominant view about the Graeco-Roman perception of the Caspian Sea as a gulf of the outer ocean, see Tarn (1901) 10-29; Heidel (1937) 32; Tarn (1948, vol. 2) 5-19; Thomson (1948) 80-86, 127-129; Pearson (1951) 80-84; Dicks (1960) 25-26, 28; W. H. Parker (1960) 279-280; Pearson (1960) 14-15, 165; Hamilton (1969) 116-119; (1971) 106-111; Bosworth (1980-95, vol. 1) 373-379; (1980-95, vol. 2) 240-241, 348; Dilke (1985) 56-57; Gardiner-Garden (1987) 13-17, 40-46; Romm (1992) 34, 42-43; M. W. Lewis (1999) 190-191; Geus (2002) 282; Roller (2006) 59-60; (2010) 140, 203-207.

Sommerstein).²⁶ The Tanais, flowing along a roughly north-to-south axis into Lake Maeotis, was by itself less suited to the bipartite configuration. If the Tanais is chosen as the final piece of the continental boundary, Europe becomes noticeably smaller than Asia, conflicting with Herodotus' explanation of a divide that produces two continents of equal size. The same as the Phasis though, the Tanais was, in some scenarios, bracketed with the Araxes to create a river that again flowed east of the Euxine and into the outer ocean, completing the symmetrical bipartite continental configuration. By the late fourth century BC, a drastically lengthened Tanais, imaginatively fused now with both the Araxes and the Jaxartes in Sogdiana, had become the standard divider of Europe and Asia. Aristotle, probably using Ctesias as a source, applies the name Araxes to the Jaxartes, and hypothesises a connection between it and the Tanais (Arist. *Mete.* 350a23-25). A passage in the Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places* alludes to the Tanais-Araxes functioning as a continental divider. The author describes Lake Maeotis, the Tanais' outlet, as part of the boundary between Europe and Asia, in the context of a bipartite continental configuration (Hippoc. *Aer.* 13.1-3).²⁷

There is no substantive evidence in the source tradition as to which of the Phasis or Tanais Anaximander and Hecataeus incorporated into the Europe-Asia divide. In the fragments of the *Periodos Ges*, Hecataeus remarks upon both rivers briefly. As discussed earlier, he mentions the Phasis in association with the voyage of the Argonauts, depicting the river as flowing from the outer ocean into the Euxine, comparable to the Nile flowing from the outer ocean into the Mediterranean Sea. The Argonauts journeyed homeward from Colchis by sailing up the Phasis, throughout the ocean, and down the river Nile into the Mediterranean (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 18a, *ap. schol. Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.259). In another fragment, Hecataeus states that the Argonauts did not sail upon the Tanais (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 18b, *ap. schol. Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.284). He also amalgamates the Tanais with the Araxes, possibly the first Greek to do so (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 195, *ap. ps.-Scymn.* 865-867):

²⁶ Cf. Aesch. *PV*, 734-735 where Io is said to pass from Europe to Asia when she crosses the Cimmerian Strait/Bosporus, geography which is inconsistent with the inclusion of the Phasis in the continental divide. The passage contradicts Io's crossing at the Thracian Bosporus in Aesch. *Supp.* 542-545; see also Hdt. 4.37.1, 4.38.2, 4.40.1; Ar. *Merchant Ships*, F 443, *ap. Steph. Byz.* s.v. Φάσις = Henderson.

²⁷ For analysis, see Bunbury (1879, vol. 1) 400, 434; Tozer (1964) 82, 135; Hamilton (1971) 110; Gardiner-Garden (1987) 13-14; Prontera (1998) 87-88.

ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν Μαιωτῶν λαβοῦσα τὸ ὄνομα Μαιωτίς ἐξῆς ἐστὶ λίμνη
κειμένη, εἰς ἣν ὁ Τάναις, ἀπὸ τοῦ ποταμοῦ λαβὼν τὸ ῥεῦμα
Ἀράξεως, ἐπιμίσγεται, ὥς Ἑκαταῖος ἐφοτεῖς.

Situated next in succession is Lake Maeotis, which has taken its name from the Maeotians, and into it the Tanais discharges, after receiving the flow from the river Araxes, just as Hecataeus says.²⁸

Hecataeus' fragments lack any reference to the relationship between the continents and either the Phasis or the Tanais. Of the two, his Tanais-Araxes is the most credible option for the final eastern section of the Europe-Asia divide, given that whenever the conflation of the Tanais and Araxes occurs in later Greek literature, it is usually entailed that the river's course separates Europe and Asia from one another (Hippoc. *Aer.* 13.1-3; Arist. *Mete.* 350a23-25).²⁹

Pindar's reference to Libya as the "third continent" in 474 BC is proof that the tripartite continental configuration had a similarly early genesis (Pind. *Pyth.* 9.8). Herodotus' reference to mapmakers who support the tripartite configuration as "Ionians" further suggests that the concept of Libya as a continent originated in the same region and intellectual tradition as the bipartite configuration associated with Anaximander and Hecataeus (Hdt. 2.16.1-2).³⁰ By the second half of the fifth century BC, there had emerged many divergent opinions about which boundary lines should be used to separate Europe, Asia and Libya (Hdt. 2.15.1 – 2.17.2, 4.37.1 – 4.45.2). In book four of the *Histories*, Herodotus contemplates the relative proportions of the three continents (Hdt. 4.42.1):

²⁸ There is a question mark over the authenticity of this fragment, as the source does not clarify whether it comes from Hecataeus of Miletus, Hecataeus of Abdera (*fl.* 4th cent. BC), or another author of the same name; cf. Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 289, *ap.* Steph. Byz. s.v. Μύκοι, where Hecataeus describes a tribe named the Mycians living close to the Araxes, which demonstrates that he at least knew of the river.

²⁹ The synonymy of the Tanais, the Araxes and the Jaxartes became integral to Macedonian propaganda during the conquests of Alexander the Great. Alexander's historians adopted the geographic fusion so that once he had reached the banks of the Jaxartes, the king could lay claim to suzerainty over the whole Asian continent: Polycleitus, *FGrH* 128, F 7, *ap.* Diod. Sic. 18.5.4; Strabo 11.7.4; Aristobulus, *FGrH* 139, F 25, *ap.* Arr. *Anab.* 3.30.7-9. For discussion, see Tarn (1948, vol. 2) 8-15; Pearson (1951) 80; (1960) 163-164; Hamilton (1969) 117-119; (1971) 109-111; Bosworth (1980-95, vol. 1) 378-379; Huxley (1985) 118-119; Prontera (1998) 87-88; Geus (2003) 238; Roller (2010) 139-140.

³⁰ The tripartite configuration eventually came to provide the basic geographic framework for medieval Christian T-O maps, prior to Christopher Columbus' discovery of the Americas in AD 1492: see Edson (1999) 3-4.

θωμάζω ὧν τῶν διουρισάντων καὶ διελόντων Λιβύην τε καὶ Ἀσίην
καὶ Εὐρώπην· οὐ γὰρ σμικρὰ τὰ διαφέροντα αὐτέων ἐστί· μήκει μὲν
γὰρ παρ' ἀμφοτέρως παρήκει ἡ Εὐρώπη, εὖρεος δὲ πέρι οὐδὲ
συμβάλλειν ἀξίη φαίνεται μοι εἶναι.

I wonder at those who have separated out and divided Libya, Asia and
Europe; for the difference between them is not small; for in length Europe
stretches alongside the others together, and it seems to me that comparing it
in overall width is of no value at all.

As per this explanation, the imagined dimensions of the three continents differed greatly. The Greeks were yet to reach or acquire empirical evidence about Europe's farthestmost extremities (Hdt. 4.45.1). For Herodotus, Europe stretched almost infinitely to the north and east of its boundary with Asia, a boundary completed by the Phasis-Araxes flowing along an east-to-west axis (Hdt. 4.37.1, 4.38.2, 4.40.1). The immense European continent surpassed both Asia and Libya in length and width. In the passage above Herodotus' tone is polemical, responding to others, presumably the "Ionians," who conceived of the continents as relatively even in size. In order to make the dimensions of Europe and Asia seem more equal, the "Ionians" would have had to divide these continents along a north-to-south flowing Tanais, not assimilated, in this instance, with the Araxes (Hdt. 4.45.2).³¹

According to Herodotus, the "Ionians" divided Asia and Libya along the course of the river Nile (Hdt. 2.15.1 – 2.16.2, 4.45.2). The Nile had been a fixture in the Greek geographic consciousness since Homer's time (Hom. *Od.* 4.477, 4.483, 4.581; Hes. *Theog.* 337). Its delta became especially familiar to the Greeks after they founded the trading station of Naucratis upon its westernmost (Canopic) branch in the late seventh century BC. The sources do not explain why the "Ionians" chose the Nile to demarcate the continental boundary between Asia and Libya. There is, though, a combination of factors likely to have influenced their decision. Firstly, the Nile had been well-known to the Greeks for a long period of time. Secondly, as in the case of the Europe-Asia divide, convention dictated that the continents be parted from one another by bodies of water, including rivers. Thirdly, by emptying into the Mediterranean, the Nile appropriately

³¹ For a later example in which the river Tanais, having no obvious connection with the Araxes, divides Europe and Asia, see ps.-Scylax, 68.5.

joined up with the continuous water passage that separated Europe from Asia, and Europe from Libya. Finally, it was believed that the Nile, like the Phasis or the Tanais, flowed into the Mediterranean all the way from the ocean that bordered southern Libya. The Greeks were unaware of the Nile's true source among the Great Lakes region of central Africa. Its hypothesised connection with the outer ocean meant that Europe, Asia and Libya were elegantly segregated by a water passage that was continuous across the *oikoumene*.³² Herodotus criticises the division of Asia and Libya along the course of the Nile. He regards the Nile boundary as inadequate because it dismembers the territory of Egypt, allotting the part west of the Nile to Libya, and the part east of the Nile to Asia (Hdt. 2.17.2).

The "Ionians" themselves gave some consideration to the dismemberment of Egypt caused by the Asia-Libya divide along the Nile. They reached the conclusion that Egypt proper was confined to the Nile Delta between the Canopic branch and the Pelusiac branch of the river. The continental boundary ran along these branches on either side of the Delta and did not, therefore, split Egypt asunder (Hdt. 2.15.1). Herodotus contests that if the "Ionians" are to be believed then Egypt and the Nile Delta lie between the continents of Asia and Libya, constituting an absurd fourth continent (Hdt. 2.16.1-2). He reasons that Egypt encompasses all the territory inhabited by the Egyptian people and that it is better to divide Asia and Libya along Egypt's north-eastern frontier with Arabia and the Arabian people. This frontier sat at the entry to the Sinai Peninsula, extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the Gulf of Suez. Herodotus argues that using Egypt's north-eastern border as the continental boundary more accurately represents the physical and human geography of the region and the *oikoumene* – it enables the whole Egyptian territory and population to be situated within the Libyan continent (Hdt. 2.17.1-2, 4.39.1-2, 4.41.1).³³ One matter of interest is Herodotus' assertion that the Nile does not flow from the ocean south of Libya. Citing the authority of indigenous Nasamonian tradition relayed to him by the inhabitants of Cyrene, he states that the river's source lies somewhere in the northwest of the continent (Hdt. 2.31.1 – 2.33.2). This theory is also connected with the Massaliote explorer

³² On the Nile's hypothesised connection with the outer ocean, see esp. Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 18a, *ap. schol. Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.259. The Greeks at this time thought the Libyan continent to be very much smaller than it is in reality. Even during the Hellenistic Age, their knowledge extended only as far as northern Somalia in the east and the Gulf of Guinea in the west. They believed that the outer ocean enfolded around the continent beyond these extremities: see Eratosthenes, F 13, 35, 57, *ap. Strabo* 1.3.2, 1.4.2, 2.5.35 = Roller.

³³ For discussion, see esp. Harrison (2007) 47; Romm (2010) 218-219.

Euthymenes, who sailed around West Africa as far as the Senegalese coast in the early sixth century BC (Sen. *Q Nat.* 6.2.22). With a source in the northwest of Libya and a west-to-east direction of flow, a large part of the Nile, in Herodotus' estimation, was in the wrong area to form the continental boundary with Asia.

The ancient Greek continental system was subject to great debate and repeated modification. The bipartite and tripartite configurations coexisted from the early fifth century BC onward, and perhaps even from as early as the late sixth century BC. It is not clear from the source tradition which continental configuration Anaximander and Hecataeus initially designed. The bipartite seems the more probable of the two, given the division of Hecataeus' geographical treatise into "On Europe" and "On Asia." The constituent parts of the continental boundary lines were primarily bodies of water. The continuous water passage stretching from the Pillars of Heracles to the eastern Euxine was the principal continental divider. It separated Europe from Asia and, in the tripartite configuration, Europe from Libya. The Greeks extended the Europe-Asia divide through either the river Phasis or the river Tanais to the outer ocean. The Asia-Libya divide usually followed the projected course of the river Nile; although, the isthmus between the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Suez provided a viable alternative. The final section of the chapter analyses the continental system's earliest involvement in Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. The notion that Europe and Asia symbolised the antithesis of barbarian and Greek, East and West is explored and critiqued in the context of the worldviews constructed by Anaximander and Hecataeus.

The Cultural Geography of the Milesian Continental System

All geographical boundaries, including those that demarcate the continents, are creations of the human mind. American academic Eric Fischer explained the socio-cultural significance of geographical boundaries:

A boundary may originally have been established because of a convenient, naturally marked site; but whether this has been the case or not, once a

boundary has been established, the human landscapes on the two sides of the frontier are bound to develop in different ways.³⁴

As Fischer noted, geographical boundaries often accord with natural features that are deliberately selected to circumscribe the territories of different peoples. Socio-cultural meaning develops via a process of ethno-cultural self-definition, whereby a group of people who have identified their territorial limits come to recognise disparities between themselves and the peoples and places on the other side of the boundary. It is widely held that self-definition was front of mind for the ancient Greeks as they conceptualised the continents and their boundary lines. Philip Kaplan, for instance, asserts that the continental system integrated the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity:

As the Greeks struggled to comprehend the peoples and lands with whom they came into contact, there emerged a distinctive worldview which set the Greeks off from the barbarians, and organised the world spatially into distinct units, the continents, within which local topographies and toponymies could be situated, and to which the various *ethnē* with their characteristic *nomoi* could be assigned.³⁵

Munn argues, in relation to Hecataeus' worldview, that the Europe-Asia divide acted as an allegory for the ethnocentric differentiation of Greek and barbarian:

The concept of continental Asia, implying also the opposing continent of Europe, corresponds closely to the concept of *barbaroi*, "barbarians," as distinguished from *Hellēnes*, "Greeks."³⁶

³⁴ Fischer (1949) 222.

³⁵ Kaplan (1999) x; cf. Price and Thonemann (2010) 117: "The Greeks began to apply a single term for all those unfortunate enough to live in the inferior, Asiatic half of the world: *barbaroi*, the 'barbarians'"; Kim (2013) 30: "Ethnic and linguistic differentiation thus becomes rhetorically submerged in the antithetical division between *hellas/hellenes* and *asia/barbaroi*, and the geographical locus of the barbarian is firmly fixed in Asia (Persian Empire)."

³⁶ Munn (2006) 181: n. 7; see also Mitchell (2007) 58-62. Coleman (1997) 188 asserts that anyone who believes that the ancient Greeks viewed Europe and Asia as synonymous with Greek and barbarian are unwise to make the cognitive leap to say that the Greeks conceived of European civilisation – the West. Some ancient sources portray the non-Greek peoples of Europe as barbarian and inferior. The Greeks, nonetheless, adjudged themselves to be the dominant culture on the continent. Europe, defined by Greeks, could then be conveniently contrasted with Asia, defined by barbarians.

In his commentary on Eratosthenes' *Geography*, Roller argues that there is evidence in the fragments which alludes to an ethno-cultural focus shaping the genesis of the Greek continental system.³⁷ The most relevant excerpt states that the Europe-Asia divide evolved from an initial distinction between mainland Greece and Caria (Eratosthenes, F 33, *ap.* Strabo 1.4.7 = Roller):

τοὺς Ἕλληνας τὰς τρεῖς ἡπείρους ὀνομάσαι οὐκ εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀποβλέψαντας, ἀλλ' εἰς τε τὴν σφετέραν καὶ τὴν ἀπαντικρὺ τὴν Καρικήν, ἐφ' ἣ νῦν Ἴωνες καὶ οἱ ἑξῆς· χρόνῳ δὲ ἐπὶ πλεον προϊόντας ἀεὶ καὶ πλειόνων γνωριζομένων χωρῶν εἰς τοῦτο καταστρέψαι τὴν διαίρεσιν.

In naming the three continents, the Greeks have not considered the inhabited world, but only their own land and Caria lying opposite, in which the Ionians and other neighbouring tribes now live; and over time, advancing further and always learning of more lands, this, their division, became general.

Eratosthenes may be invoking Homer's description of the βαρβαρόφωνοι Carians, and the memory of a time long ago when Greeks did not live on the eastern side of the Aegean (Hom. *Il.* 2.867; Strabo 14.2.28). He implies that Europe and Asia were initially regional geographical spaces that expanded exponentially into the largest landmasses of the *oikoumene*, as Greek geographic knowledge increased. While the general idea is sound, the specific detail that the Europe-Asia divide grew out of a conceptual opposition between mainland Greece and Caria is at odds with the rest of the source tradition. Roller's use of the fragment to read Greek-barbarian polarity into the origins of the Greek continental system ignores the wider context of Eratosthenes' remarks.³⁸ Earlier in the fragment, Eratosthenes declares himself to be a critic of Greek continental theory. He claims that continental boundaries are arbitrarily decided and of no practical importance, suitable only to be disputed over by intellectuals (Eratosthenes, F 33, *ap.*

³⁷ Roller (2010) 149-151.

³⁸ Roller (2010) 149 also suggests that Eratosthenes' reference to an ethno-cultural starting point for Greek continental theory is reminiscent of the original use of *οἰκουμένη* to distinguish the Greek world from the non-Greek world. As noted in the previous chapter, Roller's understanding of the history of the concept of *οἰκουμένη* is flawed, thus misinforming his interpretation of the above fragment.

Strabo 1.4.7 = Roller).³⁹ Elsewhere in the *Geography*, Eratosthenes draws upon the cosmopolitanism advocated by Alexander the Great and Stoic philosophy. As an outcome, he discards the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity, preferring to split humanity into good people and bad people, based upon an assessment of their morality (Eratosthenes, F 155, *ap.* Strabo 1.4.9 = Roller). His account of the origins of the Europe-Asia divide is perhaps then a fiction, employed as a strategy to emphasise the invalidity of continental boundaries and Greek-barbarian polarity by their association with one another.

It would have been impractical and nonsensical for Anaximander and Hecataeus, as inhabitants of Miletus, to integrate Greek-barbarian polarity into the Europe-Asia divide. Miletus was a premier metropolis of Ionia, a pluralistic region in culture and geopolitics. Ionia straddled the western frontier of Lydian and later Persian dominion, and the eastern frontier of Greek settlement. It was a nexus of interface between Greek and Near Eastern cultures, and in the vicinity of the greatest geographical convergence between Europe and Asia. According to the foundation myths, Greeks first settled in Ionia as part of a post-Trojan War emigration from the mainland led by Athens. The Ionians do not feature in Homer's epics; however, they are mentioned in Assyrian texts dating between *c.* 735 and 705 BC, which say that they raided the Phoenician coast.⁴⁰ Twelve Greek city-states, a dodecapolis, comprised Ionia – Miletus, Myus, Priene, Ephesus, Colophon, Lebedus, Teos, Clazomenae, Phocaea, Chios, Erythrae, and Samos (Hdt. 1.142.3-4). The *poleis* were dotted around the central coast of western Anatolia and upon some nearby islands. They were bordered by Aeolian Greek colonies to the north, Dorian Greek colonies to the south, and native Anatolian peoples to the east. At the conclusion of the Meliac War with Caria in the mid-seventh century BC, the twelve Ionian *poleis* founded the Panionic League.⁴¹ They came together annually at the Panionium, a supra-local sanctuary situated on the peninsula of Mount Mycale, where

³⁹ Fraser (1972, vol. 1) 530 states, regarding the continental boundaries, that Eratosthenes “denied the usefulness and validity of these divisions which, he maintained, in the absence of delineated boundaries, represented the ever-expanding frontier of geographical knowledge and had no place in an oecumenical conception of the earth, and merely provided fuel for learned disputes.”

⁴⁰ For discussion of Ionia's original settlement by Greeks, see Cook (1962) 25; Emlyn-Jones (1980) 12-13; J. M. Hall (2002) 31, 68; Crielaard (2009) 37-52; Greaves (2010) 10. The earliest reference to Ionia in extant Greek literature is found in Sappho, F 98, *ap.* P. Haun. 301 = Campbell, in which Sappho (*c.* 630 – 570 BC) refers to “Ionian cities.”

⁴¹ Although the Ionians were intermittently at war with the Carians, intermarriage between the two continually occurred. The Ionian *poleis* sited in western Caria (Miletus, Myus and Priene) had ethnically mixed populations. Greek cultural influence was prevalent throughout the whole of Caria: see Greaves (2002) 122; Mitchell (2007) 57-59; Greaves (2010) xii.

they celebrated the Panionia, a religious festival and games dedicated to the cult of Poseidon Heliconius (Hdt. 1.148.1).

Scholarship on the subject of Ionian identity in Anatolia stresses that we should not think of Ionia as a coherent administrative, political or ethnic entity. It was one of many different geographical regions within the wider sphere of Greek culture. Ionians were marked out from other Greeks primarily by the sanctuary and cult that interconnected them, fostering a sense of common Ionian cultural experience.⁴² As was the case in the many different parts of the Greek diaspora, individual *poleis* within Ionia cultivated distinctive local identities. These local identities coexisted with the regional Ionian cultural experience, as well as the broader panhellenic consciousness which bonded the Ionians together with the other Greeks in Anatolia, around the Aegean, on the mainland and throughout the Mediterranean. The Ionians were defined as Greek by their Greek speech, the tradition of their emigration from the Greek mainland to the Anatolian coast, and their involvement in the panhellenic cult activities at Delos, Delphi and Olympia in particular.⁴³ Ionia's location at the edge of the Asian continent muddies the waters in respect to any embryonic concept of barbarian Asia, especially since the architects of the continental system themselves lived there. It is possible that Anaximander and Hecataeus viewed the Greek *poleis* in coastal Anatolia as largely irrelevant to Asia's socio-cultural meaning; instead, pejoratively associating the continent solely with the foreign empires of the interior, Mermnad Lydia and Achaemenid Persia. These empires culturally and politically dominated the continent in succession and subjugated the Greeks living along the western frontier, thereby becoming the most important external forces to inform the worldviews of Anaximander and Hecataeus. Whether or not they would have perceived each in a decidedly uncomplimentary manner, within the framework of Greek-barbarian polarity, is a matter for debate.

When Anaximander produced his map of the world in the mid-sixth century BC, Ionia had become a subject state of the Mermnad Lydian Empire. Lydian political authority radiated out from the capital Sardis, sited inland of the eastern Aegean coast, throughout Anatolia as far east as the river Halys (Kizil Irmak) (Hdt. 1.72.2). During the reign of Gyges (c. 680 – 644 BC), the Lydians captured Colophon, besieged Aeolian

⁴² See Cook (1962) 24; Emlyn-Jones (1980) 8, 25; Georges (1994) 13; J. M. Hall (2002) 56; Crielaard (2009) 39, 50, 72; Greaves (2010) 11, 27, 221, 227.

⁴³ Mitchell (2007) 62-63; Crielaard (2009) 72; Greaves (2010) xii.

Smyrna, and made alliances with Ephesus and Miletus. Alyattes II (r. c. 619 – 560 BC) strengthened the Lydian foothold in Ionia and reached a stalemate with the empire of the Iranian Medians in 585 BC. His son Croesus conquered Ionia and imposed tributary taxation upon the city-states (Hdt. 1.6.1-3). One hypothesis, which Munn has recently reiterated, proposes that at its inception the concept of Asia as a continent coalesced with the geographic extent of the Lydian Empire.⁴⁴ Munn asserts that Anaximander, living during Croesus' reign, engaged with Lydian doctrine which envisaged the Anatolian homeland to be the rightful seat of power for Lydian hegemony. Anatolia west of the Halys was personified as the domain of the goddess Cybele, divine mother and consort of the Lydian king. Anaximander used Ἀσία as the name for the nascent continent that corresponded with Cybele's domain and represented a significant principle of order in the world:

Asia as a continent was almost certainly a Greek idea conceived in a Lydian context...The link between the early idea of Asia and lands that were watered through the beneficence of the Mountain Mother, from her several sacred mountains, corresponds also with the greater dominion of the Phrygian Mother, Kybele, and the land of Midas, as it was remembered by the Greeks.⁴⁵

There is ancient evidence supporting the theory that Anaximander understood Asia simultaneously as a continent and the realm of Ionia's Lydian overlords. The lyric poet Archilochus was active on the Aegean island of Paros during Gyges' reign, predating Anaximander by about one century. A fragment of his work suggests that Lydia and Asia were merging together in the Greek mind even prior to the invention of the continental system: ὁ δ' Ἀσίης καρτερὸς μηλοτρόφου ("He [Gyges] has power over sheep-rearing Asia" – Archil. F 227, *ap. schol. Hom. Od.* 15.534 = Gerber). The fragment has some precedent in Homer's single reference to Asia. The river Caystrius, which Homer associates with the "Asian meadow," flowed through the Lydian heartland around Sardis (Hom. *Il.* 2.461). Since Lydian rule ceased at the river Halys in central and eastern Anatolia, Anaximander's knowledge of the continent Asia cannot

⁴⁴ Munn (2006) 178-188; see also Georgacas (1969) 34-36; Coleman (1997) 188; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 214-215; Kaplan (1999) 20-22; Mitchell (2007) 20-21, 58-62.

⁴⁵ Munn (2006) 181-182.

have reached too far beyond that same frontier. We know from the information on display in the fragments of his geographical treatise that Hecataeus' Asia extended into Iran, Afghanistan and India. Anaximander, however, was dead before the Persians and the Asian interior that they controlled had properly entered into the Greek worldview. Increased contact with Persia following Harpagus' invasion of Ionia in c. 546/545 BC instigated an expansion of Greek geographic knowledge. Scylax of Caryanda's expedition in c. 515 BC supplied the earliest comprehensive record of Greek exploration in inner Asia. Without this depth of information available to him, Anaximander is unlikely to have conceptualised the land east of Anatolia in detail, making it plausible that the Asia depicted on his map accorded spatially with Lydian territory. The Lydian belief that their sovereignty would eventually and ideally reach beyond the Halys allowed the concept of Asia to expand in conjunction.⁴⁶

According to one school of thought, the suspected Lydian emphasis of Anaximander's Asia bolsters the established theory that the Europe-Asia divide symbolised the polarisation of Greek and barbarian. The argument is as follows – during the sixth century BC, the Ionians became the first Greeks to formulate a definite notion of Greek-barbarian polarity; the Lydians were the initial target of Ionian antipathy; a Lydian Asia, therefore, amounts to a negatively defined barbarian Asia.⁴⁷ The first overtly derogative depictions of non-Greeks as abnormal barbarians are of Ionian provenance, and contemporary with Anaximander. In a fragment of his gnomic poetry, Phocylides of Miletus (*fl.* late 6th cent. BC) implies that a small, orderly city – the model Greek *polis* – is superior to “foolish Nineveh” (*ap.* Phocylides, F 4, *ap.* Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.13 = Gerber). There are some sharp Ionian invectives against Lydian culture, which mainly concern the Lydians' reputed overindulgences in material extravagance and are thought to have helped plant the seed for the stereotyped Oriental of modern colonialist vernacular.⁴⁸ Most of the anti-Lydian invectives occur in retrospect of the empire's destruction at the hands of the Persians in 547 BC, an event

⁴⁶ Hdt. 1.73.1 claims that Croesus' offensive against the peoples east of Lydia was driven by an imperialist desire to add more territory to the empire. In due course, this offensive resulted in Croesus' defeat at the hands of the Persians. It is important to say that if Anaximander subscribed to the bipartite continental configuration that subsumed Libya into Asia, then a spatial correlation between Asia and the Lydian Empire could have been practically applied only to the Anatolian part of the continent most familiar to the Ionians. The correlation would then be imaginatively and imperfectly applied to the rest of the continent in the south and west.

⁴⁷ See esp. Coleman (1997) 188; Mitchell (2007) 20-21, 58-62; but cf. Munn (2006) 225: “Under Mermnad rule, the cultural affinities of Greeks and Lydians had been strong, and the sea in their midst did not represent an unbridgeable divide.”

⁴⁸ Coleman (1997) 188; Mitchell (2007) 20-21, 58-62.

that highlighted the deficient softness of Lydian lifestyle.⁴⁹ The lyric poet Anacreon of Teos, for example, refers to people living in decadent Lydian style (Anac. F 481, *ap. schol. M Aesch. Pers.* 42 = Campbell). Xenophanes likewise scorns how Lydian luxuries have corrupted his native Colophon (Xenophanes, F 6, *ap. Ath.* 12.526a-b = Graham).

Such examples of anti-Lydian prejudice are not indicative of the source tradition as a whole, however. Ionian indictments of Lydian culture are counterbalanced by both ambivalent and positive attitudes. Archilochus, for example, is rather indifferent toward Lydia, stating that he harbours no jealousy of King Gyges' wealth. He, furthermore, possesses no great love of "tyranny," a term referring to the monarchical regime of the Lydian king and the autocratic government of individual rulers in Lydian-controlled *poleis* (Archil. F 19, *ap. Plut. Mor.* 470b-c = Gerber). Sappho of Lesbos happily praises the sophistication of Lydian finery and craftsmanship (Sappho, F 39, 98, *ap. schol. Ar. Peace*, 1174; P. Haun. 301 = Campbell), while her contemporary Alcaeus (*fl. c.* early 6th cent. BC) applauds Lydian generosity with money (Alc. F 69, *ap. POxy.* 1234 = Campbell). Of all non-Greeks, the Lydians were the most familiar to the Ionians. The close proximity and interaction between the two peoples meant that their material cultures became very similar. The syncretism of the Greek Demeter with the native Anatolian mother goddess Cybele reveals the significant extent of the cultural fusion.⁵⁰ Sources contemporaneous with Anaximander bracket the Lydian Empire with the political institution of tyranny. Tyranny was not at this time considered an archetypal symptom of barbarism, but a normal system of government endemic also to many Archaic Greek *poleis* in Ionia and throughout *Hellas*, in places such as Corinth, Athens, Samos and Miletus. It was not until the Persian overthrow of Lydia and their invasion of Ionia that the supreme despotic authority of the Persian king, along with the unpopular tyrants whom he installed in the Ionian city-states, became viewed as the abject antitheses of Greek political life.⁵¹ The fiercest advocates of this opinion were the

⁴⁹ For discussion of the influence that the Lydian Empire's destruction had on ancient Greek perceptions of Lydian character, see esp. Hogan (1984) 122; de Vries (2000) 356-360; Kim (2009) 128-134; Skinner (2012) 93-95.

⁵⁰ On the links between the Ionian Greek and Lydian cultures, see Pollitt (1972) 12; Georges (1994) 25, 38; de Vries (2000) 356; Munson (2001) 103; Skinner (2012) 219-221.

⁵¹ For analysis of Ionian Greek attitudes to tyranny, see E. Hall (1989) 58-60; Austin (1990) 289-290; Georges (1994) 39-46; (2000) 21-22; Harrison (2002) 3; Morris (2003) 1-24; Raaflaub (2003) 59-93. The earliest negative appraisals of tyranny on the Greek mainland derive from the Athenian statesman Solon (*c.* 638 – 558 BC), whose laws and reforms are believed to have laid the foundations for Athenian democracy: see J. Lewis (2006) 6, 108-109.

Athenians, who, after the expulsion of their own tyrant Hippias in 510 BC, came to see the Persian mode of rulership as extremely oppressive and immoral. It contrasted with the freedom of speech and action embodied by the new Athenian democracy and galvanised by their defeat of the Persian armies at Marathon, Salamis, Plataea and Mycale. Earlier Ionian Greek attitudes toward Lydia and the institution of tyranny lacked the same uniform pejorative perspective.⁵² The equation of Anaximander's Lydian Asia with barbarism is untenable on this basis.

A fragment of the Ionian elegiac poet Mimnermus (*fl. c.* 630 – 600 BC) suggests that in the build-up to Asia's conceptual expansion into a continent, it was associated with Ionia as much as it was with Lydia. Mimnermus mentions Asia when remarking upon the legendary foundation of his native Colophon by settlers hailing from Pylos in the southwest Peloponnese (Mimnermus, F 9, *ap.* Strabo 14.1.4):

ἡμεῖς δὴ ὕτε Πύλον Νηλήϊον ἄστὺ λιπόντες
 ἱμερτὴν Ἀσίην νηυσὶν ἀφικόμεθα·
 ἐς δ' ἐρατὴν Κολοφῶνα βίην ὑπέροπλον ἔχοντες.

After leaving Pylos, the lofty city of Neleus,
 we came by ship to lovely Asia;
 and with our inexhaustible strength settled at Colophon.

Mimnermus' Asia has a littoral section, approached by ship across the Aegean. The heartland of the Lydian Empire, in contrast, lay inland of the seaboard. The fragment describes the city-state Colophon, located in the middle of Ionia, as an Asian destination, drawing a correlation between Asia and Ionian territory along the central coast of western Anatolia. Mimnermus is the only source which explicitly connects Asia with Ionian settlement. Homer's "Asian meadow" though coincides both with Lydia and what would later become Ionia. One of the prominent topographical features in the "Asian Meadow," the river Caystrius, traced a path through Lydia and emptied into the sea at the Ionian *polis* of Ephesus (Hom. *Il.* 2.461). The correlation between Asia and Ionia in the excerpts from Mimnermus and Homer can be used to guide our interpretation of Archilochus' statement that "He [Gyges] has power over sheep-rearing

⁵² See Drews (1973) 5; Emlyn-Jones (1980) 111; J. M. Hall (2002) 119; Crielaard (2009) 59; Gunter (2009) 58; Kim (2009) 125-134; Skinner (2012) 89-90.

Asia” (Archil. F 227, *ap. schol. Hom. Od.* 15.534 = Gerber). The circumstantial evidence hints that the Asia once ruled by Gyges incorporated the Lydian homeland and the *poleis* of Ionia, like Colophon, which the Lydian king was known to have integrated into his empire. In the mid-sixth century BC when Anaximander produced his world map, of all the Ionian *poleis*, only his native Miletus retained some degree of independence (Hdt. 1.26.1 – 1.28.1). It would make sense then for Anaximander to have defined Asia as the landmass on which the Ionians lived, but over much of which Lydian dominion reigned and continued to spread.⁵³

Hecataeus produced his map of the world and geographical treatise in the final years of the sixth century BC. Ionia was at this time under the hegemony of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, as Cyrus the Great had conquered Lydia and its subject states some four decades earlier. The rapid expansion of Greek geographic knowledge that occurred over the course of Hecataeus’ lifetime would have enabled him to plot the outline and make-up of each continent in greater detail than Anaximander. The Persian army’s subjugations of Media (549 BC), Lydia, Ionia and Babylonia (539 BC) opened up the interior of the Asian continent to the Greeks. The Greeks’ information about the lands beyond what was formerly Lydian-controlled Anatolia increased substantially following the expeditions of Demaratus (Hdt. 3.129.3), Democedes (Hdt. 7.3.1) and Scylax (Hdt. 4.44.1-3) throughout the Persian Empire. Hecataeus’ geographical treatise profited from these expeditions, with the fragments commenting on various topographical features in Media and Hyrcania, such as the Caucasus Mountains, the Caspian Gates and the Caspian Sea (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 191, 192, 286, 291, *ap. Steph. Byz.* s.v. Δανδάριοι, Τιπάνισσαι, Μηδία; Ath. 2.70a). The fragments also mention numerous tribes living in Bactria and India (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 293, 295, 297, 298, 299, *ap. Steph. Byz.* s.v. Χορασμία, Κασπάπυρος, Ἀργάντη, Καλατία, Ὀπίαι). There is anecdotal evidence that Hecataeus himself travelled widely throughout the *oikoumene*, giving his map and treatise at least some grounding in first-hand observations. Herodotus reports that Hecataeus made a trip to Thebes in Egypt

⁵³ It is unlikely that the Archaic Greek perception of Asia bore any direct relation to the other Greek areas of settlement in Asia outside of Ionia. Seager and Tuplin (1980) 141-154 point out that it was not until the early fourth century BC that all the Greeks living in Asia, including Ionians, Dorians and Aeolians were categorised together as a distinct group of people. The backdrop was the Peace of Antalcidas (387 BC), which deprived the so-called “Greeks of Asia” political autonomy by ceding their territories to the Persian Empire. Herodotus earlier groups them together, but only as a matter of convenience when discussing Croesus’ conquest of Greek city-states in western Anatolia (Hdt. 1.27.1). In the majority of instances, the Greeks in Asia are defined either as Greeks in general; as Ionians, Dorians and Aeolians; or even more narrowly as citizens of their individual *poleis*.

(Hdt. 2.143.1-4); and Agathemerus meanwhile describes him as πολυπλανής (“much-travelled” – Agathemerus, 1.1). Upgrades to Achaemenid Persian infrastructure in the late sixth century BC improved the practicality of long-distance travel throughout inner Asia. The construction of the Royal Road from Sardis to Susa, in particular, transformed the landscape of communication and travel, exemplified by the Persian courier’s renowned speed and ease of progress along the road (Hdt. 8.98.1).⁵⁴

Although Hecataeus’ world map has not survived, he is commonly thought to have made or consulted on the map that Herodotus describes in book five of the *Histories*.⁵⁵ As mentioned previously, in Herodotus’ account of the Ionian Revolt, the Milesian tyrant Aristagoras brings a map with him to Sparta and displays it to King Cleomenes (c. 499 BC). He implores the king to aid the Ionians and wage war against the Persians.⁵⁶ He then tries to tempt Cleomenes with details about the wealth of the lands comprising the Persian Empire in the order that they appear on the map (Hdt. 5.49.4-9):

“ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἀγαθὰ τοῖσι τὴν ἡπειρον ἐκείνην νεμομένοισι ὅσα οὐδὲ τοῖσι συνάπασιν ἄλλοις, ἀπὸ χρυσοῦ ἀρξαμένοις, ἄργυρος καὶ χαλκὸς καὶ ἐσθῆς ποικίλη καὶ ὑποζύγια τε καὶ ἀνδράποδα· τὰ θυμῶ βουλόμενοι αὐτοὶ ἂν ἔχοιτε. κατοίκηνται δὲ ἀλλήλων ἐχόμενοι ὥς ἐγὼ φράσω· Ἰώνων μὲν τῶνδε οἶδε Λυδοί, οἰκέοντες τε χώραν ἀγαθὴν καὶ πολυαργυρώτατοι ἐόντες.” δεικνὺς δὲ ἔλεγε ταῦτα ἐς τῆς γῆς τὴν περίοδον, τὴν ἐφέρετο ἐν τῷ πίνακι ἐντετμημένην.

“Λυδῶν δέ” ἔφη λέγων ὁ Ἀρισταγόρης “οἶδε ἔχονται Φρύγες οἱ πρὸς τὴν ἡῶ, πολυπροβατώτατοι τε ἐόντες πάντων τῶν ἐγὼ οἶδα καὶ πολυκαρπώτατοι. Φρυγῶν δὲ ἔχονται Καππαδόκαι, τοὺς ἡμεῖς Συρίους καλέομεν. τούτοις δὲ πρόσουροι Κίλικες, κατήκοντες ἐπὶ

⁵⁴ Hdt. 8.98.1: τούτων δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐστὶ οὐδὲν ὃ τι θάσσον παραγίνεται θνητὸν ἐόν· οὕτω τοῖσι Πέρσῃσι ἐξεύρηται τοῦτο... τοὺς οὔτε νιφετός, οὐκ ὄμβρος, οὐ καῦμα, οὐ νύξ ἔργει μὴ οὐ κατανύσαι τὸν προκείμενον αὐτῷ δρόμον τὴν ταχίστην (“And there is not any mortal at all who travels swifter than these messengers; this is, thus, made possible by the Persians... neither snow, nor rain, nor burning heat, nor darkness stop them [the messengers] from completing the course set before them with the greatest speed”). For analysis of the Royal Road and the Persian courier system, see Casson (1974) 53-57; cf. Graf (1994) 167-189; on Hecataeus’ travels to Egypt, see S. West (1991) 144-160.

⁵⁵ See e.g. Branscome (2013) 110.

⁵⁶ The idea of a Greek invasion of Persia, which Aristagoras uses the map to advocate, is an anachronism consistent with the ideology of panhellenic crusade that only materialised gradually after the Persian invasion, and almost exclusively in Athens. The Ionians’ primary objective was far less ambitious – to free their cities from Persian overlordship: see Flower (2000b) 71-72.

θάλασσαν τήνδε, ἐν τῇ ἦδε Κύπρος νῆσος κέεται· οἱ πεντακόσια
τάλαντα βασιλεί τὸν ἐπέτειον φόρον ἐπιτελεῦσι. Κιλικῶν δὲ τῶνδε
ἔχονται Ἀρμένιοι οἶδε, καὶ οὗτοι ἔοντες πολυπρόβατοι, Ἀρμενίων δὲ
Ματιηνοὶ χώρην τήνδε ἔχοντες. ἔχεται δὲ τούτων γῇ ἦδε Κισσίη, ἐν
τῇ δὴ παρὰ ποταμὸν τόνδε Χοάσπην κείμενα ἐστὶ τὰ Σοῦσα ταῦτα,
ἐνθα βασιλεύς τε μέγας δίαιταν ποιέεται, καὶ τῶν χρημάτων οἱ
θησαυροὶ ἐνθαῦτα εἰσὶ· ἐλόντες δὲ ταύτην τὴν πόλιν θαρσέοντες ἤδη
τῷ Διὶ πλούτου πέρι ἐρίζετε....παρέχον δὲ τῆς Ἀσίας πάσης ἄρχειν
εὐπετέως, ἄλλο τι αἰρήσεσθε;”

“The inhabitants of that continent possess more good things than all others together, gold first and also silver, bronze, coloured cloth, beasts of burden, and slaves; all these things you can have to your heart’s desire. The lands in which they dwell lie next to each other, as I shall show; next to the Ionians are the Lydians, inhabiting both a good land and having a great deal of silver.” (He said these things pointing to the map of the earth which he had brought engraved on the tablet.) “Next to the Lydians,” said Aristagoras, “are the Phrygians to the east, men that of all whom I know are the richest in flocks and in the fruits of the earth. Next to the Phrygians are the Cappadocians, whom we call Syrians. And neighbouring them are the Cilicians, whose land reaches to this here sea, in which lies the island of Cyprus; the yearly tribute which they pay to the king is five hundred talents. Next to the Cilicians, are the Armenians, and these people are rich in flocks, and next to the Armenians is the land of the Matieni. Adjoining these is the Cissian land, in which, on the river Choaspes, is that Susa where lies the palace of the Great King and where the storehouses of his wealth are located; by taking that city you can be confident of rivalling Zeus for riches....Yet when you can easily rule all Asia, will you refuse to attempt it?”

Herodotus’ portrayal of the Ionian Revolt is problematic, as it is especially critical of the Ionians.⁵⁷ It is difficult to determine how much of the episode with Aristagoras and

⁵⁷ For discussion, see Cartledge (1993) 38-39; Emlyn-Jones (1980) 169-170; Isaac (2004) 59; Cawkwell (2005) 61-86; Harrison (2011b) 48-49.

Cleomenes is factual and how much is Herodotus' own embellishment. There is, nevertheless, no obvious reason to distrust the basic premise that Aristagoras had an audience with Cleomenes and showed him a map of the world. Hecataeus' influence on the map is, likewise, reasonably assured. Most of the peoples and places plotted on Aristagoras' map are mentioned in the extant fragments of Hecataeus (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 237, 240, 265, 270, 287, *ap.* Steph. Byz. s.v. Κυνή, Μίλητος, Χάραδρος, Μύλισιν, Ὑώπη). Hecataeus was, moreover, in Miletus at the time of the Ionian Revolt, engaging in debates among Miletus' leading citizens about the plans for rebellion against the Persians (Hdt. 5.36.2). In an undertaking that dovetails with an interest in cartography, he also compiled a catalogue of Persia's tributary nations in an effort to educate his compatriots about the empire that they were intending to defy (Hdt. 5.36.2-4, 5.125.1).⁵⁸

In his presentation of the map, Aristagoras sets out with deceptive intent. He manipulates what Cleomenes sees, translating the map into a condensed hodological format that obscures the great distance and amount of time involved in a journey from Sparta to Ionia and through the Persian Empire to Susa.⁵⁹ Cleomenes declines Aristagoras' request for aid when he eventually learns of the deception (Hdt. 5.50.1-3). Even with the distortions of Aristagoras' presentation, it is clear that the map approximately equated Achaemenid Persian territory with the Asian continent. Persian lands, peoples and institutions are used to define Asia culturally. Pointing to the map, Aristagoras refers to the annual tribute that the Cilicians pay to the Persians; to Susa as the home of the Persian king; and to conquest of the Persian Empire as effecting the subjugation of all Asia. Even though the synonymy between Achaemenid Persia and the Asian continent was not technically correct in terms of physical geography, it would have had symbolic value, supplanting Anaximander's earlier equation of Asia with Lydian sovereignty.⁶⁰ At the time of the Ionian Revolt, the Persian Empire formed the

⁵⁸ See Pearson (1939) 28; Stewart (1975) 209-210; Munn (2006) 193; Harrison (2007) 56; Branscome (2010) 7.

⁵⁹ Branscome (2010) 30: "When describing his map, Aristagoras focuses exclusively on the *spatial*. Aristagoras' narrative moves inexorably toward the east, as he points out to Cleomenes on his map the peoples who inhabit Asia from Ionia to Susa. The map itself is a representation of space in condensed form. It is up to Cleomenes to spot what is lacking in Aristagoras' presentation: Aristagoras completely omits the *temporal*."

⁶⁰ Georgacas (1969) 34-36; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 214-215; Kaplan (1999) 20-22, 34; Munn (2006) 178-188, 214-219. As with Anaximander's Lydian Asia, if Hecataeus advocated the bipartite continental configuration, then an overlap between Asia and Persia would have been imaginative and imperfect. Most of the land west and south of Egypt lay outside the bounds of Persian control. Persian attempts to conquer Carthage and the kingdom of Kush in the sixth century BC both resulted in failure (Hdt. 3.19.2-3, 3.25.7).

basis of Greek knowledge of Asia. Persian dominion stretched eastward to the borders of India, northward to Colchis and Scythia, southward to the borders of Kush and Carthage, and westward to the Aegean coast of Anatolia. In the *Histories*, Herodotus details a catalogue of the twenty tributary states that comprised the empire. Included are the Ionians, Egyptians, Cyrenaicans, Babylonians, Medians, Bactrians, Indians and many others (Hdt. 3.89.1 – 3.96.1). The catalogue is likely derived from the earlier one prepared by Hecataeus, as well as official Persian records dating from Darius I's reign. Hecataeus utilised his catalogue as part of a failed bid to emphasise the immense power and size of the Persian Empire to his fellow Milesians and thereby dissuade them from rebellion (Hdt. 5.36.2-4, 5.125.1). He may have intended his symbolic equation of Achaemenid Persia with Asia to help further this cause. The concept of Persian Asia elucidates Ionia's precarious geopolitical situation, as merely one very small region in an enormous continent dominated by the largest and most powerful foreign empire known to the Greeks.

As in the case of Anaximander's Lydian Asia, there are scholars who interpret Hecataeus' Persian Asia as symptomatic of a doctrine identifying the continent with barbarism. Munn, for instance, makes the following assertion:

But by the time Hecataeus drew his map, in the reign of Darius, circumstances had changed. Persian sovereignty was not familiar to the Greeks, and the physical division between Europe and Asia, now so labelled by Hecataeus, appeared to the Greeks to have an undeniable metaphysical significance.⁶¹

The ancient Greeks, in general, discriminated against the Persians more vehemently than they did other barbarian peoples. Most of the primary sources which treat the Persians as archetypal barbarians date from after the Persian invasion of mainland Greece, the event that propelled the Persians to the forefront of Greek, especially Athenian, xenophobia.⁶² We can be less certain about how the Ionian Greeks of Hecataeus' generation viewed the Persians. The corpus of relevant source material is

⁶¹ Munn (2006) 225; for analogous arguments, see also Coleman (1997) 188; Kaplan (1999) 34; Mitchell (2007) 58-62.

⁶² On the Persians as archetypal barbarians, see Jüthner (1923) 1-13; Baldry (1965) 20-23; Momigliano (1975) 129-130; E. Hall (1989) 10-11; Cartledge (1993) 13, 38-39; de Romilly (1993) 283-292; J. M. Hall (1997) 44-47; Hartog (2001) 80-84; J. M. Hall (2002) 175; Brosius (2006) 76; Kim (2013) 30-31.

very limited, but one of the most important and frequently cited pieces of evidence is a fragment of Hecataeus' contemporary Xenophanes. The vital question that he recommends asking a new dinner guest – "How old were you when the Mede arrived?" – calls attention to the adverse effects that the Persian invasion of Ionia had upon the lives of some Greeks in the region (Xenophanes, F 4, *ap. Ath.* 2.54e = Graham). The citizens of Teos and Phocaea were so disturbed that they emigrated away from Persian hegemony. The Ionian Revolt's occurrence at the turn of the century illustrates the large-scale dissatisfaction with Persian governance that developed in Ionia, despite the *laissez-faire* approach to administration that the Persians adopted if their subjects submitted without hassle.⁶³ It is in Persian-occupied Ionia that βάρβαρος first acquires some blatantly pejorative connotations, accompanied by occasional ethnocentric criticisms of non-Greek peoples (Anac. F 423, *ap. Hdn. On Non-Greek Words and Solecisms* = Campbell; Xenophanes, F 6, *ap. Ath.* 12.526a-b = Graham; Heraclitus, F 22, *ap. Sext. Emp. Math.* 7.126; Stob. *Flor.* 3.4.54 = Graham). These criticisms, however, represent only a fraction of the diverse attitudes toward non-Greeks found in the Ionian source tradition.

K. O. Armayor maintains that Hecataeus was an early proponent of anti-Persian prejudice, an assessment which is unsubstantiated by the primary source material.⁶⁴ There is sparse evidence for sixth-century Ionian attitudes toward the Persians specifically.⁶⁵ Hecataeus' own point of view is unclear, as there are no overtly derogatory remarks about the Persians or non-Greeks in general in his fragments. The surviving ethnographical snippets are largely detached and clinical, supplying a lot of straightforward factual information.⁶⁶ His single extant use of βάρβαρος is neither a slight on foreign character nor directed at Persia's inhabitants (Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1, F 119, *ap. Strabo* 7.7.1). It is significant that Hecataeus, according to Herodotus, initially opposed the Ionian Revolt against Persia. He was unable to persuade Miletus' officials to embark upon a less antagonistic and inflammatory course of action (Hdt. 5.36.2). As an intellectual and traveller privy to more detailed knowledge of the Asian continent and the *oikoumene* than most Greeks, he would have understood that the odds of

⁶³ For discussion of Persian administrative policies in Ionia, see Boardman (1980) 98-105; Emlyn-Jones (1980) 32-33; Austin (1990) 289-306; Cawkwell (2005) 30-45; Brosius (2006) 49-50; Abulafia (2011) 134-135; Brosius (2011) 135-136.

⁶⁴ Armayor (1978) 1-9; for criticism of Armayor's assessment of Hecataeus, see Hirsch (1985) 129-130.

⁶⁵ See esp. Momigliano (1975) 123; Dihle (1994) 33.

⁶⁶ On the lack of ethnocentrism in Hecataeus' fragments, see Baldry (1965) 16-24; Kim (2009) 12.

success against the vast and formidable Persian Empire were slim.⁶⁷ Whether or not there were other motivations for Hecataeus' stance is left unspecified. Given the neutral tone of his fragments and his disapproval of the Ionian Revolt, there is reason to expect that he was relatively open-minded about the Persian presence in Ionia. Without a comprehensive body of evidence to show that Hecataeus and his contemporaries directed stark ethnocentric prejudice against the Persians especially, the theory that Hecataeus perceived the continental divide between Europe and Asia/Persia as a symbol of Greek-barbarian antithesis is on shaky ground.

Conclusion

From its genesis, the ancient Greek concept of the continent spanned both physical and cultural geography. During the earliest phases of Greek geographic and cartographic inquiry, delineating the physical composition of each continent was an important concern. The continents together structured and compartmentalised the geography of the *oikoumene* at a most fundamental level. The initial socio-cultural meaning of the Europe-Asia divide related mainly to Ionia's liminal geopolitical locus in the immediate vicinity of the continental boundary and at the western edge of Asia, which had been successively incorporated into the empires of Mermnad Lydia and later Achaemenid Persia. The Ionian architects of the continents, Anaximander and Hecataeus, respectively perceived these empires to be symbolically synonymous with Asia. One influential dogma asserts that Lydian Asia and Persian Asia originated as constructs denoting barbarism. The discussion in this chapter has signalled that such an interpretation is undermined by Anaximander's and Hecataeus' own habitation of the Asian continent, and the ambivalence of Ionian Greek attitudes toward Lydians and Persians. Asia, I have proposed, served as a geographical frame of reference for the empires of Mermnad Lydia and Achaemenid Persia, and Ionia's successive incorporation within each. Asia formed a cardinal organising principle of world physical and cultural geography, with the other continents and the rest of the *oikoumene* located beyond the pale of Lydian/Persian authority.

The next chapter uses a case study of Aeschylus' *Persians* to analyse the shift in the continents' symbolic associations that occurred following the Persian invasion of

⁶⁷ Emlyn-Jones (1980) 111.

mainland Greece. It is in Classical Athens – in plays performed at the civic theatre and in recited poetry – that the Europe-Asia divide in particular begins to interact with the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity.

The Continents and the Evolution of Ancient Greek Ethno-cultural Self-definition in the Athenian Wartime Context: A Case Study of Aeschylus' *Persians*

In 1876, Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of the then German Empire, stated that “Anyone who speaks of Europe is wrong – it is nothing but a geographical expression.” In Bismarck’s opinion, the increasingly popular concept of a supra-national European/Western identity was merely colonialist romanticism. He envisaged Europe to be a synthetically constructed geographical space – a continent sub-divided along political lines into numerous nation-states.¹ This view of Europe in some respects parallels ancient Greek thinking on the subject. The Greeks conceived of Europe and the other continents as fundamental building blocks of world physical geography. Despite the efforts of a few Western historians to treat them as if they did, the ancient Greek sources do not associate a concept of European/Western civilisation with the European continent.² The Greeks recognised that Europe was inhabited by an assortment of different peoples, most importantly by Greeks, but also by barbarians. Europe, Asia and Libya were still more than simply geographical concepts – they were invested with nuanced symbolic import. In Athens, following Greek victory in the Persian Wars, the socio-cultural and geopolitical connotations of the continents evolved to such an extent that the geography was almost secondary. The Europe-Asia divide became an integral part of Athenian Greek self-definition insofar that it was connected with the concept of *Hellas* and assimilated into the celebration of Athens’ starring role in the defeat of the Persians.

The scholarly orthodoxy holds that the Persian Wars territorialised the barbarian, prompting the geographic opposition of Europe and Asia to become an allegory for the conceptual opposition of Greek and barbarian.³ The idea that Europe stood for “Greek”

¹ For discussion of Bismarck’s interpretation of Europe, see Horden and Purcell (2000) 15.

² For the assertion that the ancient Greeks invented the concept of European/Western civilisation, see esp. Grote (1906) 265, 791-792; Murray (1954); B. Lewis (1964); (1993); Green (1996) 3-10; Huntington (1996); Hanson (2002) 4, 19; B. Lewis (2002); Pagden (2008) x-xi. Coleman (1997) 188; Varisco (2007) 65 dismantle this assertion – both argue that it is mistaken to believe that the ancient Greeks thought of themselves as European. The concept of European civilisation in the modern sense arose in response to Christian European contact and conflict with Islamic peoples of the Middle East and Asia during the Middle Ages.

³ See Hay (1957) 2-3; W. H. Parker (1960) 278; Said (1978) 54-57; E. Hall (1989) 99; de Romilly (1992) 2-4; Mikkeli (1998) 7; Hartog (2001) 81-82; Guerrina (2002) 2-3; Pagden (2002) 35-36; Alonso-Núñez

and Asia for “barbarian” has been associated with several surviving texts of Athenian verse produced during the fifth century BC. A degree of overlap between each dichotomy is observable in some instances; however, the forthcoming analysis suggests that the synonymy is less precise, absolute and prevalent than is commonly thought. Greek antipathy toward barbarians, especially the Persians, intensified in the Athenian post-invasion context.⁴ At the same time, the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity was always under pressure.⁵ In plays performed at the civic theatre and in recited poetry, a range of diverse approaches to ethno-cultural identity construction competed with one another. The underlying themes in Athenian verse regularly explore what it meant to be Athenian; what it meant to be Greek; what it meant to be barbarian; and what it meant to be human. This chapter examines how Athens’ poets inserted the continents into the discussion of Greek ethno-cultural identities. One of the most famous and important Greek tragedies, Aeschylus’ *Persians*, is used as a case study, and compared and contrasted with the works of other poets, including Simonides, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes.

The Historical and Social Contexts of Aeschylus’ *Persians* and Fifth-Century Athenian Drama

In the spring of 472 BC, the *Persians* was performed in Athens’ Theatre of Dionysus Eleuthereus during the City Dionysia festival. The tragedy was written by Aeschylus and financed by the Athenian statesman Pericles (c. 495 – 429 BC). The City Dionysia heralded the annual crop harvest and the advent of the Mediterranean sailing season, attracting *xenoi* to Athens from all parts of Greece. It was also the venue where, from at least 454 BC onwards, Delian League allies of Athens presented their annual tribute (Ar. *Ach.* 502-506, 643-644).⁶ By the time of the Persian Wars, public dramatic performance had become an established tradition of Athenian society. The on-stage storytelling and

(2003) 147; Brosius (2006) 76; Pagden (2008) x-xvii; Price and Thonemann (2010) 116-117; Meier (2012) 26-28, 37; Kim (2013) 30.

⁴ Most scholars in the field agree that the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity became significantly more vitriolic after the Persian invasion of mainland Greece: see Jüthner (1923) 1-13; Baldry (1965) 20-23; Momigliano (1975) 129-130; E. Hall (1989) 1-5; Cartledge (1993) 13, 38-39; de Romilly (1993) 283-292; J. M. Hall (1997) 44-47; Hartog (2001) 80-84; Malkin (2001) 7-8; J. M. Hall (2002) 175; Mitchell (2007) xx-xxi; Malkin (2011) 3-8; Skinner (2012) 3-4, 17-21.

⁵ See esp. Mitchell (2007) 29; Kim (2009) 2; Papadodima (2010) 41-42; Gruen (2011b) 352.

⁶ The “Athenian Tribute Lists” survive from 454 to 409 BC. These lists supply records of relatively small payments made to the goddess Athena, but the lists of total tribute paid by the allies have not survived: see Hornblower (2011) 14.

character portrayals provided communal entertainment, which roused the emotions and routinely had a didactic function (Ar. *Ran.* 686-687). Athenian playwrights taught their audiences about the *polis*, airing ideas and opinions regarding the norms, hierarchies, events and problems that affected daily life. Over the course of the 470s, Athens entered a new phase of its history. At the beginning of the decade, the Greeks finally expelled the Persian invasion force from the mainland (479 BC). The conflict remained far from over, however. The Athenians immediately started rebuilding their Long Walls; formed the Delian League; and shifted the theatre of war from mainland Greece to Persian-controlled territories. Prior to the performance of the *Persians*, the Athenian-led Delian League had already freed most of the Ionian city-states from Persian rule. In addition, they had laid siege to Persian strongholds such as Eion in Thrace, Sestos on the Hellespont and Byzantium on the Bosphorus (Hdt. 9.114.2; Thuc. 1.89.1-2, 1.94.1-2, 1.98.1; Diod. Sic. 11.44.1-3). An imperialist agenda came to the fore, with Athenian generals coercing those Greeks whom they had liberated to become allies of Athens and pay an annual tribute.⁷ Athens' expansionism combated the lingering Persian threat, while proceeding at the expense of the autonomy of lesser Greek city-states. Aeschylus' *Persians* arrived on stage in the midst of the double-edged emergence of Athens as the ascendant Greek superpower.

The *Persians* is the oldest fully extant ancient Greek tragedy. It was the second play of a tetralogy that consisted of three tragedies (*Phineus*, *Persians*, *Glaucus of Potniae*) and a satyr play (*Prometheus Fire-Kindler*). For this tetralogy, Aeschylus was awarded first prize in the dramatic contest against two other competitors. Although the other plays survive only in fragments, it appears that the *Persians* stood largely on its own both structurally and thematically. Such self-containment makes the *Persians* unusual among Greek tragedies, as does its choice of subject matter – the Persian military's defeat at Salamis and its flight back to Susa. The Battle of Salamis was an event of recent history, unlike the mythological plots that dominate most other extant Greek tragedies. Aeschylus himself was an eye-witness to some of the incidents referred to in the play, said to have fought against the Persians at Marathon, Salamis and Plataea

⁷ See Rosenbloom (2006) 97; Rhodes (2007) 35; Hornblower (2011) 19-22. For an overview of the scholarly narrative of the Athenian empire, see Kallet (2009) 48: "A central tenet of the majority of treatments of the Athenian empire and fifth-century Greek history as a whole is that gradually a League of autonomous members under Athens' leadership that aimed at revenge against Persia and protection of Greeks transformed into an empire, in which the Athenians ruled over subordinated Greeks, now deprived of freedom and autonomy (in varying degrees) and forced to obey the commands of the imperial city, including the payment of tribute, a blatant indicator and potent symbol of their reduced status."

(Ion of Chios, *FGrH* 392, F 7, *ap. schol. M Aesch. Pers.* 432). There was a precedent for a historical setting to tragic drama in two lost plays of Aeschylus' older contemporary Phrynichus. The plots of these plays also involved conflict between Greece and Persia. The *Sack of Miletus* (c. 493 BC) dramatised the Persian capture of Miletus in 494 BC, during the Ionian Revolt. Herodotus notes that the *Sack of Miletus* was badly received in Athens, causing the audience to weep by dredging up bad memories of their kinsmen's misfortune. As a result, Phrynichus was fined and the play blacklisted (*Hdt.* 6.21.2). In 476 BC, Phrynichus staged the *Phoenician Women*. This tragedy, like Aeschylus' *Persians* that followed only four years later, revolved around the Battle of Salamis. Salamis' appeal as a topic of tragic drama was not restricted to the Greek mainland, as Aeschylus reproduced the *Persians* in Sicily at the invitation of Hiero of Syracuse soon after its original performance in Athens (*schol. Ar. Ran.* 1028). The Sicilians had defeated their own foreign invaders, the Carthaginians, at the Battle of Himera (c. 480 BC), a victory alleged to have occurred on the very same day as the Battle of Salamis (*Pind. Pyth.* 1.75; *Hdt.* 7.166.1).⁸

Modern scholarship on the *Persians* is divided over whether or not the play follows the typical trajectory of Greek tragedy. Aristotle provides an ideal definition of tragedy as a type of drama that involves the enactment of an important deed entangled with human suffering. The plight of the flawed main character(s) induces a cathartic response from the audience through a release of empathy, pity and fear (*Arist. Poet.* 1449b2-3). Commentators, such as Georges and Harrison, interpret the *Persians* as primarily patriotic in tone. The celebration of Greek military and cultural superiority is elevated well above any sense of compassion for the Persian defeated.⁹ Others, including Christopher Pelling, David Rosenbloom and A. F. Garvie, acknowledge the condescending and xenophobic bent present in the play. At the same time, they feel that Aeschylus' ultimate message is about the sadness of the Persian tragedy at Salamis.¹⁰ Without relinquishing their hostility toward the foreign enemy, the audience could be moved to *pathos* by the actors' laments for the Persian dead. They could empathise,

⁸ For discussion of the production of the *Persians*, see e.g. Hogan (1984) 1-2, 221; Rosenbloom (2006) 14-15, 20-21, 161; Garvie (2009) ix.

⁹ Georges (1994) 76-114; Harrison (2000b) 51-52, 61-65. In Aristophanes' *Frogs* (405 BC), the underworld shade of Aeschylus states that by producing the *Persians* he taught the audience to yearn to defeat the Persian enemy (*Ar. Ran.* 1026-1027).

¹⁰ Pelling (1997b) 65-66: "The *Persae*, too, offers an analogy, where after so much Oriental Otherness the laments at the end of the play are likely to strike a more universal note, and some at least of the audience may come, doubtless disconcertingly, to feel contact with this strange and alien culture"; see also Rosenbloom (2006) 11, 22-25, 143-145; Garvie (2009) xi-xxii.

invoking the recollection of their own great tragedy. After the Battle of Thermopylae (480 BC), the Athenians themselves had been forced to evacuate their city and remain idle while the Persians razed it to the ground (Ar. *Vesp.* 1078, 1089). The *Persians* is, therefore, a tragedy that balances complex and conflicting emotions. There is pride in Greek military valour exemplified by the Athenians; anger at King Xerxes' ὕβρις (“insolence”) and ἄτη (“delusion”) in attacking Greece; and empathetic appreciation of the abject suffering inflicted upon the Persians in Susa. With many of their loved ones lost to the waters off Salamis, the Persians experienced a universal torment of war all too familiar to the Athenians.

The notion of Greek-barbarian polarity is a pivotal theme of the *Persians*. In the wake of the Persian invasion, the play explores the process of Greek, especially Athenian Greek, self-definition. As Rosenbloom points out, conflict with Persia had a significant influence on how the Athenians identified themselves and all Greeks collectively:

Xerxes' invasion refashioned the symbolic universe in which the Athenians lived. Mythical narratives gained a new resonance as figurations of the invasion. The trauma of 480/79 and subsequent victories united Athenians and became core elements of their communal identity.¹¹

A heightened consciousness of ethno-cultural identity developed in Athens amid an atmosphere of triumph tinged with anxiety about the possibility of future hostilities.¹² The definition of Athenian Greek via juxtaposition with the Persian barbarian became a major topic of Athenian public discourse. The victories at Salamis, Plataea and Mycale were publicised as panhellenic triumphs; though the Athenians adjudged themselves to have played the leading role in warding off the barbarian, proof that they were the best and most Greek of all Greeks. It is unsurprising that a preoccupation with the barbarian arose in classical Athens. The Persian invasion was fresh in the Athenian collective memory, and, in terms of demographic make-up, Athens had a huge non-Greek slave population, which translated into a far larger proportion of barbarians per capita than in most other Greek *poleis*.¹³ The exploration of Greek-barbarian polarity acted out in the

¹¹ Rosenbloom (2006) 36.

¹² See Pollitt (1972) 64-65; Balcer (1983) 260; Georges (1994) 117.

¹³ J. M. Hall (2002) 186.

Persians is complicated. There are ongoing debates about whether or not the play is rigidly xenophobic, and whether or not it should be categorised as Orientalist.¹⁴ These debates impact how Aeschylus' depiction of the continents and its relation to Greek ethno-cultural identity construction is interpreted.

The ancient Greeks propagandised the Persian Wars as a cataclysmic defeat for the Achaemenid Empire, thereby accentuating the grandeur of their own military success. This propaganda features in the *Persians* and also throughout the fragments of Simonides' poetic verses (New Simon. F 11, *ap. POxy* 2327, F 5 = Boedeker and Sider). For Persia, however, the failed assault on mainland Greece was a minor setback on its western frontier that did not greatly lessen its military strength or political influence.¹⁵ Persia remained a formidable player in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean during the fifth century BC, and, as such, further clashes with the empire-building Athenians were inevitable. Under the generalship of Cimon (c. 510 – 450 BC) in the 470s and 460s, Athenian aggression against the Persians reached its apex.¹⁶ Intermittent forays into Persian zones of control culminated in resounding victory for the Delian League at the Battle of Eurymedon in 466 BC. Soon after, some allied Greek *poleis*, including Naxos and Thasos, attempted to secede from the League. Athens continued on its path toward empire, forcing all who were disloyal to submit (Thuc. 1.98.1-4, 1.100.2). Only a few years on from Eurymedon, the Persians turned the tables on the Athenians and the Delian League, routing the forces that were attempting to aid Egypt in revolt from the Great King. Tensions again came to a head in 449 BC at the

¹⁴ E. Hall (1989) 57 views Greek-barbarian polarity in the *Persians* as simple and direct: "Aeschylus' *Persae*, which celebrates the victories over Persia, is the earliest testimony to the absolute polarization in Greek thought of Hellene and barbarian, which had emerged at some point in response to the increasing threat posed to the Greek-speaking world by the immense Persian empire. Rhetorical examination of the abstract opposition of Hellenism and barbarism of the kind particularly common in Euripides is not to be found in *Persae*: philosophical treatments of the antithesis develop later under the influence of the sophists. But the term *barbaros* itself, never found in extant mainland Greek literature before the Persian Wars, is found no fewer than ten times, and the contrast of Hellas with Persia or Greeks with barbarians underlies the rhesis, dialogue, and lyrics." Hall's reading of the play has been influential; however, there are those who are less convinced that Aeschylus' depiction of the Persian defeated conforms to a rigid anti-barbarian prejudice: see e.g. Gruen (2011b) 11-12.

¹⁵ For discussion of the disparity between the significance that the Greeks afforded the Persian Wars and the Persian perspective, see Boedeker (2001) 131-134; Hornblower (2011) 137-140.

¹⁶ Flower (2000b) 66-69 suggests that the first murmurs of a panhellenic crusade against Persia date from around this time, despite not reaching their apogee until the late fifth and early fourth centuries BC. The ideology of a crusade was perhaps first mooted in Simonides' "Battle of Plataea" elegy and later by Cimon himself. A fragment of Simonides hints at a Greek desire to drive the Persians out of Asia (New Simon. F 14, *ap. POxy*. 3965, F 21 = Boedeker and Sider). It is unclear, due to the highly lacunose state of the papyrus, whether Asia here denotes the whole continent or more narrowly the Anatolian Peninsula. Flower (2000b) 66-68 argues that the whole continent is meant, whereas Crielaard (2009) 42 prefers the regional Anatolian application; see also Mitchell (2007) 10-11.

Battle of Cyprian Salamis, where the Athenians defeated the Persians on land and at sea before sailing back to the mainland. This battle was the last direct conflict between the Greeks and Persians until the Spartan king Agesilaus invaded Asia Minor in 396 BC. The ceasefire after the Battle of Cyprian Salamis is thought to have been formalised by the Peace of Callias, in which both sides made concessions. Persia had to withdraw its tentacles from Ionia and the Aegean, while Athens agreed to abandon its interests in Asia Minor, Cyprus and Egypt (Lycurg. *Leoc.* 72-73; Diod. Sic. 12.4.5).

The conclusion of hostilities between the Greeks and Persians was followed soon after by the Thirty Years' Peace treaty signed by Athens and Sparta in 446-445 BC. Relations between the two rival city-states had steadily deteriorated over the 470s and 460s as the Delian League morphed into an Athenian empire that threatened the autonomy of Sparta and its Peloponnesian League allies. War broke out in 458 BC, but it eventually resulted in a stalemate. Hornblower argues that the ensuing peace settlement "effectively acknowledged Athens' empire by sea."¹⁷ Athens maintained all its tributaries and possessions throughout the Aegean, assuring it of maritime supremacy and economic prosperity. The Athenians at this time lived under a radical democracy. The democratisation of the political structure in combination with relative peace at home and abroad further strengthened the Athenians' self-proclaimed preeminent status among the Greeks. By the 440s, Athens had confirmed itself as the shining light of Greek culture and politics. The state sponsored learning, philosophy and the arts attracted talented people from all over the Greek world. The Acropolis was rebuilt, the Parthenon constructed, and some of the most influential prose and poetic works known to history produced. The renewal of direct conflict with Sparta in the Peloponnesian War did not initially undermine Athenian primacy and self-confidence. At the end of the first year of the war (431 BC), Pericles reportedly spoke at the public funeral for the war dead. He praised Athens as the τῆς Ἑλλάδος παίδευσιν ("school of Hellas" – Thuc. 2.41.1), depicting his *polis* as an educator and exemplar for all Greek city-states to follow. Pericles' words typify the Athenian view of themselves as a special people, superior to barbarians and also to other Greeks. In 451 BC, he had introduced a new, much more exclusive citizenship law. The law stated that henceforth Athenian citizenship could only be conferred upon children whose mother and father were both of the *polis*, when previously only one's father needed to be Athenian (Plut.

¹⁷ Hornblower (2011) 46.

Per. 37.2-5). Athenian exceptionalism was also entailed by the belief in their autochthony on the Greek mainland (Hdt. 1.56.2 – 1.58.1; Eur. *Ion*, 589-590; Thuc. 1.1.3, 2.16.1 – 2.17.1, 2.36.1).¹⁸ During the last three decades of the fifth century, the Peloponnesian War ran its course and ultimately ended Athenian hegemony in Greece. Facing financial ruin, Athens surrendered in 404 BC and the Delian League disbanded. Prevailing with financial aid from Persia, Sparta briefly assumed the mantle of Greece's dominant superpower. Throughout the period of its ascendancy, Athenian society constructed a partisan narrative of its own history and identity. Every year many of the dramatic performances staged at the theatre were vital agents of the narrative's transmission. Athens' protracted antagonism with Persia; frictions with other *poleis*; and the perceived hierarchy of Athenians, Greeks and barbarians were central themes in many productions, especially Aeschylus' *Persians*.

The Continents and Athenian Greek Ethno-cultural Identity Construction in the *Persians*

A chorus of Persian elders sings the parodos (lines 1-158) of the *Persians*. These men had been left behind in Susa to govern the empire while King Xerxes was absent waging war against the Greeks.¹⁹ The opening lines of the play introduce the chorus and juxtapose the realm where the elders remain with the place to which Xerxes' army has departed (Aesch. *Pers.* 1-7):

Τάδε μὲν Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων
Ἑλλάδ' ἐς αἶαν πιστὰ καλεῖται,
καὶ τῶν ἀφνεῶν καὶ πολυχρύσων
ἐδράνων φύλακες,
κατὰ πρεσβείαν οὐς αὐτὸς ἄναξ
Ξέρξης βασιλεὺς Δαρειογενὴς
εἴλετο χώρας ἐφορεύειν.

¹⁸ On the idea of Athenian exceptionalism, see esp. Tuplin (1996) 132; Konstan (2001) 35; J. M. Hall (2002) 31; Champion (2004) 34-36.

¹⁹ The parodos is where Aeschylus introduces many of the play's main themes and where the audience gains initial impressions of its substance and direction. The *Persians* is unusual among Greek tragedies in that it does not begin with a prologue: see Garvie (2009) 43.

We, of the Persians, the people who have departed
to the land of Greece, are called the trusted,
and of the abodes wealthy and rich in gold
we are the guardians,
whom because of our rank, the master himself,
King Xerxes born of Darius,
chose to administer his lands.

The first line of the *Persians* closely resembles that of Phrynichus' *Phoenician Women* (Phrynichus, F 8, *ap. Argum. Aesch. Pers.* = Storey). The slight difference is that Aeschylus uses the participle οἰχομένων, replacing Phrynichus' βεβηκότων ("who have gone"). This substitution gives the phrase a more foreboding undertone, with οἰχομένων insinuating that those who have departed have done so forever, fated to perish.²⁰ The chorus repeats the word on several occasions early in the play (Aesch. *Pers.* 13, 60, 178). Unbeknownst to the elders, the repetition presages the messenger's eventual narration of the Persian decimation at Salamis. He brings the news to the Persians in Susa during the first episode (lines 159-531) of the play: τὸ Περσῶν δ' ἄνθος οἴχεται πεσόν ("the flower of the Persians, having fallen, is departed" – Aesch. *Pers.* 252). Hearing this announcement, the chorus and the Persian queen Atossa (Xerxes' mother) realise that countless Persian soldiers have departed permanently from their homeland and from life. The corpses are doomed to wash up around the shores of Salamis (Aesch. *Pers.* 272-277).

In line 2 of the play, Ἑλλάς is the land to which the Persian invasion force departed. In this instance, Ἑλλάς specifically denotes the Greek mainland, the general scene of the Persian conquest. Salamis itself was an island situated in the Saronic Gulf, only one nautical mile from Athens' Piraeus. The land from where the Persians came is most commonly identified in the play as Ἀσία, the continent sited on the other side of the Aegean from the Greek mainland in Europe. Kaplan argues that in the context of the Persian Wars, the Athenians imagined Asia to be defined threefold. In ethnographic

²⁰ For discussion of the first line of the *Persians* and the significance of οἰχομένων, see Hogan (1984) 221; Rosenbloom (2006) 39; Sommerstein (2010) 45. Garvie (2009) 50 notes that the anapaestic metre of lines 1 to 64 would have necessitated the change of βεβηκότων to οἰχομένων. Moreover, Aeschylus' word choice was also motivated by his desire to convey a sinister ambiguity. The chorus has not yet heard about the Persian disaster at Salamis. At the same time the audience in the theatre is well aware of it, and so attuned to the ominous foreshadowing.

terms, Asia was the barbaric, cultural antithesis of Europe. Europe itself was the home of the Greeks, the continent where they originated and on which a great number of them, most notably the Athenians, still lived. In political terms, Asia and the Achaemenid Persian Empire were conflated. The Persians' monarchical regime represented the embodiment of everything that was alien about Asia. In geographical terms, Asia was a continent, one of the largest individual geographical spaces of the *oikoumene*.²¹ The majority view is that the Athenians began to prioritise the ethnographic and political definitions of Asia in the aftermath of the Persian invasion. Asia, domain of the Persian monarchy and its barbarian subjects, was the antagonist of the Athenian *polis* and all the Greeks in Europe.²² One of the most popular storylines of fifth-century Athenian drama, the Trojan War, elaborated a history of enmity between Asia and the Greeks in Europe. Some of the sources reinterpret the Trojan War as the historical equivalent of the Persian Wars; Troy and the Trojans symbolising Asia the barbarian Persians.²³ The extent to which Aeschylus' depiction of the continents Europe and Asia integrates a cultural and political antithesis of Greek and barbarian has so far not been adequately addressed by scholarship. The intricacies of each dichotomy and the relationship between them require further scrutiny.

In the *Persians*, Asia is first mentioned early in the parodos. The chorus refer to it in the context of the Persian military's fateful departure from the continent: $\pi\alpha\sigma\alpha\gamma\alpha\rho\ \iota\sigma\chi\upsilon\varsigma\ \text{'}\text{Ασιατογενῆς/ οἴχ\omega\kappa\epsilon$ ("for all the strength born of Asia has departed" – Aesch. *Pers.* 11-12). The "strength born of Asia" designates the massive army of men and weapons that Xerxes has marched out of the continent across into mainland Greece. The phrase points the audience back to the chorus' self-introduction. With Xerxes and his army absent, Persia has been left in the hands of aged guardians charged to administer the empire and safeguard its wealth of possessions in Asia (Aesch. *Pers.* 1-7). The chorus establish a motif of the Asian continent's opulence, associating it specifically with the royal seats at Susa ("the abodes wealthy and rich in gold"), Sardis

²¹ Kaplan (1999) 2, 11; for similar arguments about the manifold nature of Asia as a concept, see Ziolkowski (1994) 25; Fredricksmeyer (2000) 140.

²² See esp. Hartog (2001) 81-82; Meier (2012) 37.

²³ Georges (1994) 64: "In this way the epic of Troy took on independent life as the historical vocabulary of the enmity between Europe and Asia, which would ever after express the irreconcilable conflict of Hellene and barbarian, of Europe against Asia"; see also E. Hall (1989) 21, 47-48, 51, 68; Brosius (2006) 76; Mitchell (2007) 13, 78-79, 169-176. The equation of the Trojan War with the Persian Wars is perhaps briefly alluded to in the *Persians* (Aesch. *Pers.* 65) – see Boedeker (2001) 124-127; Rosenbloom (2006) 27-28; Garvie (2009) 65-72, 81-86 – and also on the Parthenon friezes: see Pollitt (1972) 81-82; Price and Thonemann (2010) 116; Hornblower (2011) 9-10, 33.

and Babylon (Aesch. *Pers.* 3, 41-45, 52-53). The Greeks had since the Archaic period perceived the Asiatic empires of Lydia and Persia to be axiomatically luxurious.²⁴ This perception remained prominent in post-invasion Athens, seized upon by dramatists and vase painters. In Euripides' *Heracles*, for example, the chorus declare μή μοι μήτ' Ἀσιήτιδος/ τυραννίδος ὄλβος εἶη/ μὴ χρυσοῦ δώματα πλήρη/ τᾶς ἥβας ἀντιλαβεῖν ("Never may the wealth of Asiatic tyrants permit me to receive houses full of gold in return for my youthful manhood" – Eur. *HF*, 643-646).²⁵ In Athenian cultural ideology, excessive material wealth was a product of greed, itself a stigma of non-Greek barbarism. Aristophanes' *Acharnians* articulates the concept of barbarian greed when the ambassador states that οἱ βάρβαροι γὰρ ἄνδρας ἡγοῦνται μόνους/ τοὺς πλεῖστα δυναμένους καταφαγεῖν καὶ πιεῖν ("The barbarians regard as men only those who can eat and drink the most" – Ar. *Ach.* 77-78).²⁶

Said, E. Hall and Georges have notably pigeonholed the depiction of Asia's opulence in the *Persians* as a prototype of modern colonialist Orientalism. Aeschylus, they assert, insinuates that Asiatics, living under the Achaemenid Persian monarchy, are morally corrupted by the empire's immense material wealth.²⁷ The Persian royals in the play are hierarchical, immoderate, emotional and effeminate (Aesch. *Pers.* 79-80, 355-368, 371-379, 422, 592-593, 556-557). These vices of lavish lifestyle clashed with the Athenians' own paradigm of producing just, manly and moderate men (Eur. *Aegeus*, F 7, *ap.* Orion, 6.1; Eur. *Alexander*, F 54, *ap.* Stob. *Flor.* 4.33.3 = Collard and Cropp). The idea that the *Persians* meets the criteria of Orientalism – that it pejoratively stereotypes the Persian characters as idiosyncratically Asiatic barbarians ("Orientals"), hedonistic and driven to excess – is an exaggeration. It overlooks how the motif of Asia's opulence primarily functions in the play, and also Athenian society's wider response to the riches of the Achaemenid Empire. Aeschylus' impression of Asiatic wealth is based on ethnographic observation, which grew out of Ionian interactions with Lydians and Persians, as well as Athenian encounters with the Persian armies of Darius

²⁴ See e.g. Archil. F 19, *ap.* Plut. *Mor.* 470b-c = Gerber; Anac. F 481, *ap.* schol. M Aesch. *Pers.* 42 = Campbell; Xenophanes, F 6, *ap.* Ath. 12.526a-b = Graham.

²⁵ The Athenians understood gold, in particular, to be a symbol for Asiatic royal wealth. Hogan (1984) 221; E. Hall (1989) 80 note that in the parodos of the *Persians* the word gold (χρυσός) is used repeatedly to describe Xerxes' army (Aesch. *Pers.* 3, 9, 45, 53-54, 79-80). This symbolic association recurs in other fifth-century Athenian accounts of Asiatic royalty (Simon. F 21, *ap.* Lycurg. *Leoc.* 109 = Campbell; Eur. *Hec.* 492; *IA*, 74; *Med.* 1255-1256; *Rhes.* 382, 439, 921-922; *Tro.* 506, 819-822, 922, 995, 1074-1075): see E. Hall (1989) 127-128; Rosenbloom (2006) 60; Garvie (2009) 50-51.

²⁶ Cf. Soph. *Tereus*, F 587, *ap.* Stob. *Flor.* 3.10.25 = Lloyd-Jones.

²⁷ See Said (1978) 56-57; E. Hall (1989) 2, 79-80, 99-100, 127-128; Georges (1994) xv.

and Xerxes. Indulgence in material luxuries was not uniquely characteristic of the barbarians in Asia. Greek poets and playwrights use the same kind of vocabulary to portray a number of Greek *poleis*, including Samos, Lampsacus, Sybaris, Colophon, Mycenae and even Athens, as similarly opulent (Hom. *Il.* 7.180, 11.46; *Od.* 3.304; Xenophanes, F 6, *ap.* Ath. 12.526a-b = Graham; Bacchyl. 18.1-2; Soph. *El.* 9; Callias, *Cyclopes*, F 8, *ap.* Ath. 12.524f = Storey).²⁸ As much as moderation and equality became considered virtues in fifth-century Athens, Miller has illustrated that Athenian society was receptive to the luxuries of Asia. The Athenian elite adopted a mass of Persian finery and riches, taken from the defeated enemy primarily as indicators of status and wealth.²⁹ Indulgent living was, therefore, neither distinctively Asiatic nor definitively un-Athenian and un-Greek. Aeschylus' emphasis on the opulence in Asia would not, therefore, have had a decisive part in the invective stereotyping of a barbarian Asia.

The notion of Greek-barbarian polarity is extraneous to the principal purpose of Aeschylus' emphasis on the opulence in Asia. The emphasis draws attention to a stark contradiction between the continent's unsurpassed material wealth and its current poverty of men and military strength. The exodus of the Achaemenid Empire's enormous military forces and the subsequent catastrophe at Salamis leaves Asia in a state of emptiness. The conception of Asia as emptied by the absence and death of so many fighting men is repeated throughout the play, like in the following statement by the chorus (Aesch. *Pers.* 548-549):

νῦν γὰρ πρόπασα δὴ στένει
γαῖ' Ἀσιᾶς ἐκκενουμένα.

For now, yes indeed, all the
emptied land of Asia groans.³⁰

²⁸ See Bernhardt (2003) 19-23, 121-135; Garvie (2009) 50-51, 62-63; Skinner (2012) 90-91. Saïd (2001) 65-67 argues that in Euripides' *Bacchae* the opulence of Asia is an important theme. Asia is not alone though; Greece is itself a haven of the wealth that has been appropriated from the barbarians in Asia.

²⁹ Miller (1997) 1-28, 243; on the Ionians' similar readiness to adopt aspects of Persian material culture, see Miller (2013) 25-26.

³⁰ Cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 119, 730, 759-761 where Susa, the capital of the Achaemenid Persian Empire in Asia, is described as empty. On the theme of Asia's emptiness in the *Persians*, see esp. Harrison (2000b) 71. Asia's emptiness also entails a loss of the masculinity contained within the Persian military. With its men departed and defeated, Asia is an effeminate land.

In the first episode of the play, Queen Atossa points out that an empire's riches are of little worth in the grand scheme of things. Imperial success and strength depend not on material wealth, but on adequate human resources – the might of an empire's military forces is what matters most (Aesch. *Pers.* 166-167). For the Persians in Susa, emotions of hurt and dejection accompany the news of their fleet's annihilation at Salamis. The poverty of men and military strength in Asia is transformed from a temporary problem to one that feels ever more permanent and lamentable in contrast to the triumph of *Hellas*. The chorus reiterate that Persia's material affluence pales into insignificance considering its martial impotence at Salamis. The army is decimated and what remains is distant and defeated (Aesch. *Pers.* 249-252):

ὦ γῆς ἀπάσης Ἀσιάδος πολίσματα,
 ὦ Περσὶς αἶα καὶ πολὺς πλούτου λιμήν,
 ὥς ἐν μιᾷ πληγῇ κατέφθαρται πολὺς
 ὄλβος...

O cities of the whole land of Asia,
 O land of Persia and storehouse of much wealth,
 how your great power has been destroyed in one
 blow...

Abject sadness grips Asia, with Aeschylus accentuating the intense distress of the wives, mothers and daughters left behind on the continent. They face the possibility of forever losing the men, that “strength born of Asia,” whom they love (Aesch. *Pers.* 59-64, 114-125, 132-139, 286-289, 537-544).

Especially in the parodos of the *Persians*, the chorus build up the colossal size of King Xerxes' invasion force (Aesch. *Pers.* 9, 25, 39-40, 46, 56-57, 74, 87-88). Asia initially projects an aura of formidability. As well as material wealth, it possesses vast reserves of men and arms. The aura of formidability makes the Persian defeat at Salamis salient and drives home the enormity of the suffering now ensuing in Susa and across the Asian continent.³¹ Aeschylus depicts the Persians in Susa as misguided about the

³¹ Rosenbloom (2006) 40-42: “The chorus displays the subconscious process by which countable resources – gold, men, material – produce the delusion of invulnerability, the prelude to enormous suffering....Xerxes ‘empties’ Asia of its men, mobilizing his entire empire and losing it in defeat”; see also Isaac (2004) 275-276.

value of having a superior quantity of men and arms in war. On two occasions during the first episode, Atossa is overly concerned with quantity. She asks the chorus and later the messenger how many soldiers and ships comprised the Greek military that so compelled it to feel confident of matching the Persians at Salamis (Aesch. *Pers.* 235, 334-336). Both of the responses to Atossa provide a realisation, all too late, that even a great numerical advantage does not necessarily guarantee victory in battle. The Greek fleet was greatly outnumbered at Salamis; it was the outstanding quality of their military prowess that enabled the Greeks to overcome the Persians (Aesch. *Pers.* 236, 337-343).³² By the end of the play, Xerxes is left bemoaning the unexpected valour and expertise of the Greek military (Aesch. *Pers.* 1025-1027):

Χορός: Ἰάνων λαὸς οὐ φυγαίχμας.³³
 Ξέρξης: ἄγαν ἄρειος· κατεῖ-
 δον δὲ πῆμ' ἄελπτον.

Chorus: The Ionian host are not cowardly.

Xerxes: They are very brave; and I have looked
 down on an unexpected misery.

By creating and then shattering an aura of Persian formidability, Aeschylus sensationalises the magnitude of the Persian disaster and likewise allied Greek victory at Salamis. The portrayal of Asia's wealth and massive military capacity contributes to the aura, as does the recurrent syncretism of the Achaemenid Persian Empire with the Asian continent. The syncretism begins in the parodos (Aesch. *Pers.* 12, 59-62, 74-75), but becomes particularly apparent in the first stasimon of the play (lines 532-597). The chorus, after absorbing news of the army's plight on the Greek mainland, voice their fear that Persian rule over all Asia may not continue for much longer (Aesch. *Pers.* 584-587):

³² On the superiority of quality over quantity in warfare, see e.g. Eur. *Erechtheus*, F 365, *ap. Stob. Flor.* 4.10.19 = Collard and Cropp.

³³ At line 178, Queen Atossa states that her son departed Asia wanting to plunder the "land of the Ionians" (Ἰόνων γῆν). Aeschylus seems aware of the Persians' common usage of the term *Yauna* to refer to all Greeks in general, and not solely to the Ionian Greeks of Asia Minor with whom they were most familiar; cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 563, 950-951, 1011; for discussion of the term *Yauna*, see E. Hall (1989)

τοὶ δ' ἀνὰ γᾶν Ἀσίαν δὴν
οὐκέτι περσονομοῦνται,
οὐδ' ἔτι δασμοφοροῦσι
δεσποσύνοισιν ἀνάγκαις...

Certainly those throughout the land of Asia
will not for much longer be subject to Persian rule,
nor will they still have to pay tribute
under the compulsion of their masters...

At line 737, the Ghost of Darius asks Atossa if their son Xerxes has journeyed back safely to “this continent” (ἡπειρον τήνδε). It is implied that a return to Asia is a return home for the Persian king. A fragment of the Athenian comic poet Plato (*fl.* c. late 5th cent. BC) alludes to the same concept of Persian Asia, stating that when the eldest son of the Persian king is born, all Asia makes sacrifice and observes the birthday of the prince (Plato, F 227, *ap.* Pl. *Alc.* 1.121c = Storey). Like Hecataeus prior, Aeschylus and his contemporaries would not have thought the Persian Empire to be commensurate literally with Asia, covering the continent’s every inch.³⁴ The explorers and intellectuals whose works comprise the source tradition for modern studies of ancient Greek geography were unusual in terms of how much they knew about the *oikoumene*. The primary source material suggests that the average Athenian theatregoer’s knowledge of the *oikoumene* and thus the Persian Empire was comparatively basic (Hdt. 8.132.3; Ar. *Nub.* 206-215; Thuc. 6.1.1). The majority of Athenians never set foot outside of the Greek mainland. They had only a vague mental picture of the Persian Empire, shaped by hearsay and speculation – in other words, Persia was “as distant as El Dorado.”³⁵ It would be unsurprising if the general public of Athens, for the most part unfamiliar with the world beyond the *polis* and its regional surrounds, viewed the known portion of Asia to be synonymous with the immense land area of the Persian Empire. The empire’s seemingly limitless mass of troops, hailing from various far-flung tributary states

78; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001) 323-346; J. M. Hall (2002) 70-71; Cawkwell (2005) 1; Crielaard (2009) 42-43; Garvie (2009) 114-115; Kim (2009) 26-29; (2013) 33; Miller (2013) 21-22.

³⁴ In the surviving Aeschylean corpus, Asia appears to include the known parts of what is now Africa. This view of Asia seems consistent with the popular bipartite continental configuration: see Aesch. *Pers.* 66-67, 799; *PV*, 807-812; Aesch. *Prometheus Unbound*, F 106, *ap.* Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 19.2 = Sommerstein.

³⁵ Long (1986) 96-97; cf. Georges (1994) 115-117.

throughout the Asian continent, had overrun Athens only a few years prior to the *Persians*.³⁶ As a continent, Asia was one of the largest geographical spaces known to the Greeks. It doubled as the largest geographical space against which Aeschylus' Athenian audience could define their ultimate military triumph, a frame of reference for digesting the location, size and imperial reach of the defeated Persian Empire. The concept of Persian Asia found in the *Persians* magnifies the impressiveness of the Athenian military apparatus. It implies that Athens and its allies had vanquished not merely the Persians, but the strength of the whole Asian continent, emboldening the spectators' pride in the Athenian martial valour, arms and strategy exemplified by the exploits at Salamis.³⁷ As Georges states, "Asia, in its ultimate meaning to the Greeks, was the continent into which they would be absorbed and disappear – or not."³⁸

The concept of Persian Asia as a synonym for Persian power and formidability became fundamental to Athenian *polis* identity and the Athenocentric perception of panhellenic identity. Aeschylus gives priority to the martial facets of these identities. He treats Salamis as the victory of a small allied Greek force spearheaded by a single city-state (Athens) over the leviathan wealth, size, military and arms of Persian Asia. In the parodos, shortly after the chorus define the Persian army as "all the strength born of Asia" (Aesch. *Pers.* 12), they recite a condensed catalogue of some of Xerxes' generals and the troops that each commanded (Aesch. *Pers.* 16-58).³⁹ The catalogue delineates Asia by way of the immense Persian military might that has ironically departed the continent for mainland Greece. It describes the soldiers from Persia's Iranian homeland as both conquering with the bow (τοξοδάμαντες) and riding upon horseback, an intimidating sight, steadfast and destructive in battle (Aesch. *Pers.* 26-28). The Egyptians in the army wage war from aboard ships fearsome and countless in number (Aesch. *Pers.* 39-40). The Lydians, along with the Mysian spearmen, aim to throw the yoke of slavery around *Hellas* (ζυγὸν ἀμφιβαλεῖν δούλιον Ἑλλάδι). They are another intimidating sight, riding in squadrons of chariots with commanders who are

³⁶ The Achaemenid division of their empire into tributary states was well-known to Herodotus (Hdt. 3.90.1 – 3.94.2) and also to Hecataeus decades earlier (Hdt. 5.36.2-4, 5.125.1). To the average Greek, even a very rough idea of the numerous different peoples that were subjects of the Persians would have made the empire seem immeasurably vast.

³⁷ The sensationalist figures for the size of Xerxes' invasion force cited by ancient Greek sources, such as Simonides – 3 million (Simon. F 2, *ap.* Hdt. 7.228.1 = Campbell) and Herodotus – 5.2 million (Hdt. 7.186.2), might have also been intended to embroider the feat of victory at Salamis. The issue is keenly debated by scholars, with most modern estimates settling on a figure between 300,000 and 500,000.

³⁸ Georges (1994) xvi.

³⁹ Cf. the exhaustive catalogue of Xerxes' army and fleet compiled by Herodotus (Hdt. 7.60.1 – 7.99.3).

unflinching before the spear-point (λόγχης ἄκμονες) (Aesch. *Pers.* 41-52). Babylon sends forth a throng of soldiers, its marines and infantry are relied upon especially for their courage as archers (τοξουλκῶ λήματι πιστούς) (Aesch. *Pers.* 52-55). The catalogue ends with a catchall phrase for the remainder of the army, which would have consisted of a myriad of different ethno-cultural groups (Aesch. *Pers.* 56-58):

τὸ μαχαιροφόρον τ' ἔθνος ἐκ πάσης
 Ἀσίας ἔπεται
 δειναῖς βασιλέως ὑπὸ πομπαῖς.

And the sword-bearing host from all
 Asia follows
 subject to the mighty summons of the king.

These three lines culminate the catalogue's depiction of Asia as the repository of the Persian war machine and bound by the authority of the Persian king. The chorus then continue on in the same vein, stating that all Asia nursed (πάσα χθὼν Ἀσιῇτις/ θρέψασα) the empire's fighting men, and now groans with intense longing for them as they wage war overseas (Aesch. *Pers.* 61-62).⁴⁰

The catalogue in the parodos entails a boast that the allied Greek rout of the Persians at Salamis was a triumph over all Asia, its assets and peoples, for whom it was conversely a tragedy. A similar boast appears on an inscription on one of the stelae erected outside the temple of Artemis at Artemisium. The inscription celebrates allied Greek exploits at the Battle of Artemisium, a naval engagement between Greeks and Persians that occurred simultaneously with the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC (Simon. F 24, *ap.* Plut. *Them.* 8.3 = Campbell):

παντοδαπῶν ἀνδρῶν γενεὰς Ἀσίας ἀπὸ χώρας
 παῖδες Ἀθηναίων τῷδέ ποτ' ἐν πελάγει
 ναυμαχίᾳ δαμάσαντες, ἐπεὶ στρατὸς ὤλετο Μήδων,

⁴⁰ An Athenian inscription wrongly attributed to Simonides memorialises the great naval victory over the Persians at Cyprian Salamis in 449 BC. The inscription personifies Asia in the same way as Aeschylus does: see Simon. F 45, *ap.* Diod. Sic. 11.62.3 = Campbell: μέγα δ' ἔστεινεν Ἀσίς ὑπ' αὐτῶν/ πληγῆϊσ' ἀμφοτέραις χερσὶ κράτει πολέμου ("And Asia groaned loudly, having been struck by both their hands with the strength of war").

σήματα ταῦτ' ἔθεσαν παρθένωρ Ἀρτέμιδι.

Tribes of all kinds of men from the land of Asia
the sons of the Athenians once subdued in a naval battle on this sea
and when the army of the Medes perished,
they dedicated these tokens to the maiden Artemis.

Artemisium ended in a tactical stalemate, but was quickly followed up by total victories for the Greeks at Salamis and Plataea. The inscription is attributed to Simonides, a contemporary of Aeschylus who gained international renown for composing commemorative verses about the engagements of the Persian Wars. Simonides' verses and Aeschylus' *Persians* achieved great renown in the aftermath of the Persian invasion of mainland Greece. Accordingly, the equation of Asia with the sum of Achaemenid Persia's imperial territory and military reached a wide audience of Greeks.⁴¹ It has so far been demonstrated that the delineation of Persian Asia in the *Persians* fortified the notion of an empire with enormous quantities of resources for war. The play also sheds light on the military quality of Persian Asia.

Throughout the parodos, the chorus underline the diversity and proficiency of Persian Asia's horde of fighting men. Xerxes' army comprises cavalrymen, infantrymen and marines (Aesch. *Pers.* 18-19), and utilises an array of weapons, including chariots, warships, javelins, swords, and most exceptionally the bow. The bow above all other armaments stands as an emblem of the Persian enemy, pitted against the spear of the heavily-armed Greek hoplite (Aesch. *Pers.* 51, 85-86, 239-240, 555-556, 729-730, 817).⁴² The Greeks eulogised the hoplite as the elite unit of war. A fragment of Euripides' *Temenidae*, for instance, pronounces that there is nothing better than to conquer by the spear-point (Eur. *Temenidae*, F 731, *ap.* Stob. *Flor.* 4.10.2 = Collard and Cropp). In the *Persians*, the opposition of bow and spear comes into focus at the

⁴¹ Raaflaub (2004) 308: n. 7 asserts that we do not know how widespread the concept of Persian Asia was in the immediate aftermath of the Persian invasion. The Persians had a history of conquest in Thrace and on the European side of the Hellespont and Bosphorus. The Delian League forced the Persians back into Asia and also reclaimed Ionia for the Greeks. These exchanges meant that there were some in-built contradictions in the conceptual fusion of Achaemenid Persia and Asia: see Rosenbloom (2006) 117. Herodotus provides the next extant reference to the concept of Persian Asia, in which he mistakenly describes it as an outgrowth of Persian ideology (Hdt. 1.4.4).

⁴² Pindar states that the "curve-bowed Medes" (Μῆδαιοι ἄγκυλότοξος) suffered defeat against the Greeks (Pind. *Pyth.* 1.78); Hdt. 1.136.2 describes bowmanship as one of the Persians' archetypal traits; see also Simon. F 14, 46, 7, *ap.* schol. Pind. *Ol.* 13.32b; A. P. 7.258, 7.301 = Campbell.

conclusion of the parodos especially, as the chorus contemplate the fate of Xerxes' army (Aesch. *Pers.* 147-149):

πότερον τόξου ῥῦμα τὸ νικῶν,
ἢ δορικράνου
λόγχης ἰσχὺς κεκράτηκεν;

Is the string of the bow victorious,
or has the strength
of the spear-head's point prevailed?⁴³

Extant Attic art and literature of the fifth century BC shows that the Athenians stereotyped a range of non-Greek combatants as archers. Along with the Persians, the Scythians, Thracians and fabled Amazons were all frequently associated with archery. The Athenians observed bowmen to be a characteristic feature of barbarian armies, more numerous and more prominent than they were in Greek armies.⁴⁴ Athenian representations of archery as a method of warfare are often derogatory. They denigrate the art as inferior to hand-to-hand hoplite combat, labelling its exponents, because they fight from afar, as second-rate and cowardly (Soph. *Aj.* 1120-1124; Eur. *HF*, 160-161).⁴⁵ The *Persians* itself presents the Greek spear as ultimately triumphing over the Persian bow during the course of the Persian invasion (Aesch. *Pers.* 278, 926-927). The play, nevertheless, lacks a strong derogatory stance on Persian archery and warfare. In a more ambivalent and dramatically appropriate tone, the chorus describe the bowmen of Asia as brave and terrifying, nearly an equal match for the Greek hoplites (Aesch. *Pers.*

⁴³ On many of the Persians' own monuments the bow acts as a symbol of Achaemenid monarchy, see Root (1979) 117-118; 164-169; Garvie (2009) 57-58; note that Aesch. *Pers.* 320-321 unusually describes a Persian general Amphistreus as wielding a spear (πολύπονον δόρυ/ νωμῶν).

⁴⁴ After the Persians, the Scythians in particular were considered to be famous exponents of the bow and arrow: see esp. Soph. *Nauplius*, F 427, *ap.* Steph. Byz. 135 = Lloyd-Jones.

⁴⁵ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 4.242, 11.386-390. For analysis of Athenian attitudes toward foreign archery, specifically those expressed in vase painting, see Tsiafakis (2000) 364-389; Boedeker (2001) 126: n. 30; Lissarrague (2002) 101-124; Rosenbloom (2006) 48; Garvie (2009) 57-58; Miller (2011) 123-131; Skinner (2012) 74, 83-86, 90; the foreign archer is a popular subject of decoration on Attic vases: see e.g. the "Eurymedon Vase" (fig. 1, pg. 25). The Persian currency from c. 520 – 330 BC was the Daric, gold coins which had on their obverse an image of the Great King holding his bow. The Greeks nicknamed these coins "archers" – Plutarch notes that the Great King had driven Agesilaus of Sparta out of Asia with ten-thousand "archers," referring to the bribes that he distributed among the leaders of Athens and Thebes so that they would wage war against the Spartans (Plut. *Ages.* 15.6); for discussion of the Daric, see esp. Melville Jones (1986) s.v. Daric: 66.

26-27, 30-31, 51-55, 85-86, 147-149).⁴⁶ Despite eventually succumbing to the spear, the whole mass of Xerxes' army is adjudged to have been fearless in battle (Aesch. *Pers.* 92). Aeschylus' view of Persian military quality is an important ingredient in his portrait of Persian Asia as a military powerhouse. The Persians are well-versed in the art of war, fated by destiny to conquer, destroy walls and overrun cities (Aesch. *Pers.* 95-99). Persian Asia is, therefore, a daunting opponent for the Greeks in terms of both quantity and quality. The salute to the quality of their soldiers maximises the tragic nature of the Persians' defeat at Salamis and the splendour of the allied Greek victory. By depicting Persian Asia as a titanic and worthy barbarian enemy, Aeschylus calls attention to Greek military brilliance. Virtues pertinent to the battlefield, such as ἀρετή, τιμή, ἀνδρεία, and σωφροσύνη ("self-discipline"), were considered to be important Greek attributes, especially in the Athenian wartime context.⁴⁷ The image of a worthy barbarian enemy much more effectively highlights the triumph of Greek virtues than one of an enemy that is mediocre or even deficient. Miller explains that fifth-century Attic vase painting predominantly pictures Xerxes' soldiers as defeated but valiant warriors – in the same vein as the *Persians*, the glory of Greek military success is commensurate with the quality of the enemy.⁴⁸

Persian Asia and mainland Greece are the two main geographical referents in the *Persians*. At line 2 in the parodos, the term Ἑλλάς is used to describe mainland Greece as the destination of Xerxes' army, while at line 50, the mainland is the part of Ἑλλάς that the army's Lydian contingent pledges to help enslave. Throughout the play, Persian Asia and mainland Greece are juxtaposed. One of the best examples of this juxtaposition occurs when the chorus first learn of the dismal Persian disaster at Salamis (Aesch. *Pers.* 268-271):

ὅτοτοτοῖ, μάταν
τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα παμμιγῇ
γᾶς ἀπ' Ἀσίδος ἦλθ' ἐπ' αἶαν
Δίαν, Ἑλλάδα χώραν.

⁴⁶ The ancient Greek view of archery was not exclusively negative and unequivocal. Some of the greatest Greek culture heroes, such as Odysseus and Apollo, were celebrated archers: see e.g. Hom. *Od.* 21.1-41; Soph. *Phil.* 113-115; Eur. *Alc.* 40-41; cf. Thuc. 2.13.8.

⁴⁷ See Turner (2001) 40.

⁴⁸ Miller (2011) 126-133.

Otototoi, in vain
the many weapons of all sorts
went from the land of Asia to the land
of Zeus, the country of Greece.⁴⁹

Aeschylus constructs a Persian perspective according to which Athens stands out as the most important city upon the Greek mainland. The Persians in Susa view Athens as the primary target of Xerxes' aggression (Aesch. *Pers.* 284-285, 824). The Athenians had two decades earlier assisted the Ionians in razing to the ground the Persian-controlled city of Sardis (498 BC) during the Ionian Revolt. They had then defeated at the Battle of Marathon the initial Persian invasion force sent across the Aegean by Darius I. After the burning of Sardis, Darius swore to take revenge upon Athens and apparently instructed one of his servants to tell him three times a day to remember the Athenians (Hdt. 5.105.2). Aeschylus stages one exchange between Atossa and the chorus, which shows that the Persians conceived of Athens as the backbone of Greek resistance in the war (Aesch. *Pers.* 231-234):

Βασιλεία: ποῦ τὰς Ἀθήνας φασὶν ἰδρῦσθαι χθονός;
Χορός: τῇλῃ πρὸς δυσμαῖς ἄνακτος Ἡλίου φθινασμάτων.
Βασιλεία: ἀλλὰ μὴν ἴμεῖρ' ἐμὸς παῖς τήνδε θηράσαι πόλιν;
Χορός: πᾶσα γὰρ γένοιτ' ἂν Ἑλλάς βασιλέως ὑπήκοος.

Queen: Where upon the earth do they say Athens is situated?

Chorus: Far away, near the Lord Sun's setting in the west.

Queen: But yet my son had a desire to hunt this city?

Chorus: Yes, for all Greece would become a subject of the king.

By singling out Athens among all the Greek *poleis*, Aeschylus solidifies the idea that the victory at Salamis was won against heavily stacked odds. Colossal Persian Asia yielded to a city-state and its allies comparatively diminutive in size and population, but

⁴⁹ For other examples in Athenian drama where mainland Greece and Asia are placed in direct geographic opposition, see esp. Soph. *OC*, 695-697; Eur. *F* 981, *ap.* Plut. *Mor.* 604e = Collard and Cropp.

titanic and extraordinary in terms of military capability.⁵⁰ The Persians' failure, in spite of their conspicuous advantages and own battlefield merits, branded them and the continent that they dominated as a strategically and tactically inferior enemy, vanquished and driven into woeful retreat by the exceptional Athenian Greeks.

Εὐρώπη is another geographical referent which features heavily in the *Persians*. Europe is, like mainland Greece and Athens, contraposed with Asia. These dichotomies, though not analogous, operate alongside one another in the play. The chorus first mention Europe in the parodos, following the catalogue of the Persian army (Aesch. *Pers.* 65-70):

πεπέρακεν μὲν ὁ περσέπολις ἤδη
βασίλειος στρατὸς εἰς ἀντίπορον γείτονα χώραν,
λινοδέσμῳ σχεδία πορθμὸν ἀμείψας
Ἄθαμαντίδος Ἑλλάς
πολύγομφον ὄδισμα ζυγὸν ἀμφιβαλὼν αὐχένι
πόντου.

The city-destroying army of the king
has now passed across to the neighbouring land opposite
by means of a bridge of boats bound with cables crossing the strait
of Helle, daughter of Athamas,
throwing together a well-riveted road as a yoke on the neck
of the sea.

Europe is the “neighbouring land opposite” Asia, and the Hellespont is the principal divider of the two continents (Aesch. *Pers.* 67-68, 722-723). At lines 130-131, Europe and Asia are the two lands (αἶψας) yoked together across the Hellespont by a common artificial promontory (πρῶνα κοινὸν) – Xerxes’ bridge of boats, built to transport his army across the water. Europe is only referred to by name once in the *Persians* and not until line 799 in the second episode. The Ghost of Darius states that some remnants of

⁵⁰ The chorus’ belief that if Athens were to fall then so too would all *Hellas* is repeated by Herodotus (Hdt. 7.139.2-5). For additional references in the *Persians* to Athens as the leader of the Greek mainland and primary military antagonist of Persian Asia, see Aesch. *Pers.* 319, 348, 716, 758, 790, 796, 809, 976.

the Persian army have been left behind to wage war in Greece after Xerxes' withdrawal, a revelation which surprises the chorus (Aesch. *Pers.* 796-799):

Εἶδωλον Δαρείου: ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὁ μείνας νῦν ἐν Ἑλλάδος τόποις
στρατὸς κυρήσει νοστίμου σωτηρίας.
Χορός: πῶς εἶπας; οὐ γὰρ πᾶν στράτευμα βαρβάρων
περὰ τὸν Ἑλλης πορθμὸν Εὐρώπης ἄπο;

Ghost of Darius: But not even the army now left in the land of Greece
will obtain a safe return home.

Chorus: What did you say? For has the whole barbarian army not
crossed back over the Hellespont from Europe?⁵¹

The allusions to Europe in the *Persians* all relate to the conveyance of Xerxes' army back and forth between Persian Asia and another continental landmass over which the king has been unable to establish any extensive or lasting control.⁵² Europe is important to Aeschylus in that it contains mainland Greece and Athens. The Athenians and their allies repelled the Persians' advance through Europe and into mainland Greece, causing them to retreat back into Asia. The retreating soldiers returned to the Hellespont to find the bridge of boats that had yoked Asia and Europe destroyed by a storm (Hdt. 8.117.1 – 8.120.1). In the *Persians*, the bridge and its destruction represent the yoke of slavery that Xerxes' invasion force attempted but failed to impose upon the mainland Greeks living in Europe (Aesch. *Pers.* 50, 233-234, 758, 809).

The yoke symbolises a conceptual schism between the Persian king's monarchical rule in Asia and the Greek mainland's hard-fought freedom from that rule in Europe. In the parodos, the chorus cite Xerxes' autocratic rule over Persian Asia and his attempts to extend his power beyond the continent (Aesch. *Pers.* 74-75):

⁵¹ The chorus' use of the phrase πᾶν στράτευμα βαρβάρων is a bit of a red herring insofar as it does not necessarily connote that the Persian army is barbarian in the sense of being culturally inferior. The phrase comes from the mouths of Persian elders, meaning that it is unlikely to be intended as a stark derogatory insult. When the word βάρβαρος appears in the *Persians*, the meaning is sometimes "non-Greek" and at other times "un-Greek": see Aesch. *Pers.* 186-187, 255, 337-338, 391, 423, 433-434, 475, 635, 844; cf. Simon. F 1, *ap.* Plut. *Them.* 15.4; Soph. *Aj.* 1263, 1291-92; Hdt. 1.4.4; for discussion, see esp. Bacon (1961) 4, 10-11; Hogan (1984) 227; Garvie (2009) 118.

⁵² During the final stasimon of the play, the chorus mention the history of Persian conquest in parts of Europe and some of the islands lying off its coast. They lament the difference between Darius' relative success in the past and Xerxes' current failure (Aesch. *Pers.* 859-907): see Rosenbloom (2006) 102-103, 117; Garvie (2009) xxx.

πολυάνδρου δ' Ἀσίας θούριος ἄρχων
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν χθόνα ποιμανόριον θεῖον ἐλαύνει...

The impetuous ruler of populous Asia
drives his divine flock over the whole earth...

Two other notable passages further detail the yoke of slavery inflicted upon the inhabitants of Asia as subjects of one supreme ruler. The latter of the passages outlines the history of the yoke. The Ghost of Darius lists some of the most famous Median and Persian kings upon whom the gods bestowed the honour of sole rulership of all Asia (Aesch. *Pers.* 762-779). Earlier in the play, from lines 181 to 200 in the first episode, Queen Atossa recounts to the chorus a dream that pre-emptes the Persians' failure to subjugate Athens and mainland Greece in the same way that they had Asia. In her dream, she sees two sisters of the same ancestry who are in conflict with one another. One is from a "barbarian land" and wearing Persian attire; the other is from *Hellas* and wearing Dorian attire. Xerxes attempts to quell the conflict by yoking the sisters under his chariot and subjecting them to his authority. One of the sisters, the barbarian one, calmly surrenders to the yoke, while the other, the Greek, struggles violently and smashes the yoke in half, causing Xerxes to fall out of his chariot (Aesch. *Pers.* 181-200).⁵³ The sisters are said to be of the same ancestry (κασιγνήτα γένους/ ταύτου) because the Greeks, according to their own folklore, had ancient blood ties to various peoples of Achaemenid Persia. In one tradition, the Greek hero Perseus had a son Perses, who was the eponymous ancestor of the Persians (Hdt. 7.61.3, 7.150.2). Rather than separating them, ethnic descent binds the sisters. The basis of their differentiation instead lies in the dissimilarity of their clothing, the separate lands allotted to each, and most significantly their contradictory responses to the restraints of the yoke. Although dreamt up by a Persian character, the sisters give an insight into Aeschylus' thinking

⁵³ Much has been made of the Greek's Dorian attire in juxtaposition with the barbarian's Persian garb (Aesch. *Pers.* 182-183). Both Dorian and Ionian dress were worn in fifth-century Athens. The primary sources frequently associate the plainer Dorian type with the Greek ideals of simplicity and moderation, and contrast it with the more ornate Ionian dress, closer in style to Persian attire, which was a symbol of wealth and luxury. Garvie (2009) 115 states that the reason that the Greek sister in Atossa's dream wears Dorian type dress rather than Ionian is "probably because the latter was too similar to Persian dress to provide the necessary contrast." There are numerous references in Athenian drama to dress style as visibly distinguishing Greeks from barbarians, see e.g. Soph. *Phil.* 223-224; Eur. *Heracl.* 130-131; *IT*, 246-247; *Or.* 1370, 1430; *Phoen.* 138.

about the distinctive differences between Greeks and Persian barbarians. A binary of free Greek versus slavish Persian was at the forefront of his mind.

Various interpretations have been put forward in regard to what exactly the sisters in Atossa's dream are meant to represent. They may be personifications of Europe and Asia; of Greece and Persia; or of mainland Greece and the Greek enclave in western Asia. Garvie interprets Atossa's dream as akin to the preface of Herodotus' *Histories* (Hdt. 1.1.1 – 1.5.2), both contextualising the Persian Wars as one chapter in a historical and enduring antagonism between Greeks in Europe and barbarians in Asia:

The struggle which the dream symbolizes is clearly that which Herodotus too envisages between east and west, between Asia (or Persia) and European Greece, the latter represented by the woman in simpler Dorian dress.⁵⁴

Throughout the *Persians*, the predominant geographical antithesis is between mainland Greece, home to Athens, and Asia, conceptually synonymous with the Achaemenid Persian Empire. Aeschylus affords the continental antithesis of Europe and Asia a more minor position.⁵⁵ The two antitheses are related by Xerxes' yoking of the continents, the symbol of his ambition to enslave the mainland Greeks in Europe, as he and his predecessors had enslaved the peoples of Asia. The message of Atossa's dream is twofold; first, that the Persian system of hereditary monarchy suppresses individual liberty and will; secondly, that the mainland Greeks in Europe are instinctively defiant of this yoke of slavery and predestined to overcome it. With victories at Salamis, Plataea and Mycale, the allied Greeks ultimately extricated their land from the yoke. They then counterattacked, besieging Persian garrisons on the edges of Europe in Thrace, Macedonia, the Hellespont and Bosphorus. This Delian League offensive freed all Europe, and was the next phase in the continent's fight against the Persian despotic tide that had begun when the Massagetae successfully resisted Cyrus the Great's advance in 530 BC (Hdt. 1.214.1-5).⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Garvie (2009) 116; cf. Harrison (2000b) 71-76; Rosenbloom (2006) 23.

⁵⁵ The Europe-Asia dichotomy is of greater consequence in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*: see Aesch. *PV*, 734-735, 790. The dichotomy is also a trope of Euripidean tragedy: see Eur. *Andr.* 645-654, 799-800; *Hec.* 480; *IT*, 134-135, 394-418; *Tro.* 747, 928.

⁵⁶ For the argument that the Athenians came to see Europe's primary socio-cultural meaning as encompassed by its freedom from the Persian autocracy that dominated Asia, see Saïd (2001) 99-100; Nippel (2002) 289-291; Pagden (2002) 36-38; Mitchell (2007) 129; Meier (2012) 26, 35.

The account of Atossa's dream indicates that Athens' experience of the Persian Wars contributed to an intensified politicisation of Athenian *polis* identity and wider Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. The Athenians observed a polarity between the subordinate existence of the peoples in Persian Asia and the political rights, freedom of speech, and equality before the law idealised in their own democracy. The perils of autocracy were imprinted in the Athenian social consciousness. In Euripides' *Medea* (431 BC), for example, the chorus declare that because the desires of tyrants are terrible it is better to be accustomed to live on equal terms with one another (Eur. *Med.* 119-123).⁵⁷ It was not so long ago, only in the late sixth century BC, that democracy had replaced the rule of absolute tyrants in Athens (Hdt. 5.78.1).⁵⁸ Freedom from the oppressive monarchical regime in Persian Asia became a catchcry of panhellenism during and after the Persian Wars. This catchcry called attention to the Athenian democratic exemplar and was conveniently silent about the Greeks in Asia and their submission to the Great King. For the purposes of asserting its alpha status in diplomatic relations with allies and rivals, Athens needed to propagandise that freedom had been secured for the benefit of all Greeks united under Athenian leadership. In the *Persians*, the messenger divulges to Atossa that "freedom" (ἐλευθερία) was the word on the lips of the Greek soldiers as they entered into battle against the Persians at Salamis (Aesch. *Pers.* 401-405):

καὶ παρῆν ὁμοῦ κλύειν
πολλὴν βοήν· ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων, ἴτε
ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ', ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ
παῖδας, γυναῖκας, θεῶν τε πατρώων ἔδη,
θήκας τε προγόνων· νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγών."

And from those there together one could hear
a mighty shout: "Sons of the Greeks, go on,
set free the fatherland, and set free

⁵⁷ Cf. Soph. F 873, *ap.* Plut. *Pomp.* 78.7 = Lloyd-Jones; Eur. *Auge*, F 275, *ap.* Stob. *Flor.* 4.8.3 = Collard and Cropp.

⁵⁸ For discussion of the conceptual antagonism of free Athenian/Greek and the slavish Persian barbarian, see Diller (1961) 44-45; E. Hall (1989) 2-5, 16-17, 100; de Romilly (1993) 283-288; Gray (1995) 201; Hartog (2001) 84; Munson (2001) 26; Saïd (2001) 99-100; Nippel (2002) 289-293; Raaflaub (2004) 56, 86; Munson (2005) 2; Mitchell (2007) 77-80; Anson (2009) 22; Gehrke (2009) 88; Kim (2009) 49; Meier (2012) 26-28, 37.

your children, wives, the temples of the ancestral gods,
and the tombs of our ancestors; now go forward on behalf of all this.”

Some of the epitaphs on display around Greece, attributed to Simonides, likewise explain to passers-by that the fallen Greek soldiers died fighting for the cause of freedom from the Persian yoke of slavery (Simon. F 8, 18, *ap. A. P.* 7.253, 7.257 = Campbell):

εἰ τὸ καλῶς θνήσκειν ἀρετῆς μέρος ἐστὶ μέγιστον,
ἡμῖν ἐκ πάντων τοῦτ’ ἀπένειμε Τύχη·
Ἑλλάδι γὰρ σπεύδοντες ἑλευθερίην περιθεῖναι
κείμεθ’ ἀγηράντῳ χρώμενοι εὐλογίῃ.

If the greatest part of excellence is to die nobly,
then Fortune allotted this to us most of all;
for hastening to ordain Greece with freedom
we lie here possessing everlasting praise.

παῖδες Ἀθηναίων Περσῶν στρατὸν ἐξολέσαντες
ἤρκεσαν ἀργαλήν πατρίδι δουλοσύνην.

The sons of the Athenians, having utterly destroyed the Persian army,
warded off grievous slavery from their fatherland.⁵⁹

In the *Persians*, Aeschylus defines the peoples of Persian Asia as slaves of the Great King, symbolised by the sister who succumbs to the yoke in Atossa’s dream. In the parodos, the chorus describe the Persian generals as ταγοὶ Περσῶν/ βασιλῆς βασιλέως ὑποχοι μεγάλου (“commanders of the Persians, kings who are subjects of

⁵⁹ See also Simon. F 16, 12, 15, 10, 17b, 20, *ap. Diod. Sic.* 11.33.2; *Plut. Arist.* 19.7; *IG*, 7.53; *Mor.* 870f, 870e; *SEG*, 10.404 = Campbell; *Timoth. Pers.* F 788, *ap. Plut. Phil.* 11 = Campbell. Aloni (2001) 98-100 notes that Simonides’ verses are often panhellenic in nature. The tense city-state rivalries between the likes of Athens and Sparta are omitted in favour of numerous references to *Hellas* as “fatherland.” This patriotic spin contrasts with the picture of sour relations found in the historical works of Herodotus and Thucydides.

the Great King” – Aesch. *Pers.* 23-24).⁶⁰ They furthermore compare the Persian army to a swarm of bees, which has exited the hive with its leader, the queen bee (λεῶς/στῆνος ὥς ἐκλέλοιπεν μελισσᾶν σὺν ὀρχάμῳ/στρατοῦ – Aesch. *Pers.* 126-129). The simile alludes to the army’s vast size and subservience to the whims of King Xerxes.⁶¹ Athens itself was the largest slave market in ancient Greece. Slaves were at the core of its economic system, owned both publically and privately, with many employed in workshops, the mines, state administration and on countryside farms. There is insufficient data on the demographics of Athenian slavery; nonetheless, Cartledge suggests that a reasonable estimate for the total number of slaves in the *polis* and the surrounding region of Attica in the Classical period is somewhere between 80,000 and 100,000.⁶² Each slave was the property of his master and had no individual rights, relegated to the status of chattel. Almost all slaves were non-Greek, sourced especially from Thrace, the Black Sea, Asia Minor and Syria through war, piracy and international trade.⁶³ For the Athenian citizenry watching the *Persians*, Aeschylus’ presentation of Persian Asia as enslaved to the Great King would have brought to mind their own master-slave relationships. The Persian soldiers at Salamis were lowly social equivalents of Athens’ slave rabble – and, in fact, some of them would have been enslaved in Athens as captives of war at the time of the *Persians*’ production. The allied Greek victory, in which free Greek citizens subdued the barbarian slaves of Persian Asia, restored natural order in a duplicate of Athens’ social stratification. The same kind of sentiment resonates in Euripides’ *Iphigenia at Aulis* (405 BC), performed near the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War when Persian-backed Sparta was on the verge of victory over Athens. In the play, Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, states that βαρβάρων δ’ Ἑλλήνας ἄρχειν εἰκός, ἀλλ’ οὐ βαρβάρους,/ μήτερ, Ἑλλήνων· τὸ μὲν γὰρ δοῦλον, οἳ δ’ ἐλεύθεροι (“It is fitting, mother, that Greeks rule barbarians, but not barbarians Greeks; for barbarians are slaves, while Greeks are free” – Eur. *IA*, 1400-1401).⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Cf. Eur. *Hel.* 276: Helen of Troy states that τὰ βαρβάρων γὰρ δοῦλα πάντα πλὴν ενός (“For among the barbarians [Trojans] all are slaves except one”).

⁶¹ There is a precedent for this bee simile in the *Iliad*: see Hom. *Il.* 2.86-93, 12.167-172.

⁶² See Cartledge (2003) s.v. slavery: 1415.

⁶³ On the perceived inferiority of slaves in the Athenian social consciousness, see e.g. Eur. *Antiope*, F 218, *ap. Stob. Flor.* 4.19.41 = Collard and Cropp; Arist. *Pol.* 1254b16-19, 1255a-b; for discussion, see Tordoff (2013) 5-7; Wrenhaven (2013) 7-12.

⁶⁴ For discussion of the passage, see esp. Flower (2000b) 90.

In both quantity and quality the invading army depicted by Aeschylus in the *Persians* is impressive. When matching up against Greeks however, the effectiveness of the Persian soldiers is diminished as a result of the social stratification of the Achaemenid Empire. For Aeschylus' audience, all of the Persian soldiers, except of course the Great King, have a social status akin to the slaves in Athens. Slaves faced off against free men at Salamis. The Persians were driven by the whip, fighting on behalf of the Great King, whereas the allied Greeks were citizens driven by their own volition, fighting to keep their *poleis* free from oppression. The allied Greeks had everything to lose; they had to succeed or be destroyed, an equation which ensured that they were an incredibly motivated and deadly foe. A discussion between Atossa and the chorus, which recalls the earlier Battle of Marathon, contains the suggestion that the political freedoms enjoyed by (some) Athenians citizens tipped the scales in their favour in the war with Persia (Aesch. *Pers.* 241-244):

Βασιλεία: τίς δὲ ποιμάνωρ ἔπεστι κάπιδεσπόζει στρατῶ;
 Χορός: οὔτινος δοῦλοι κέκληνται φωτὸς οὐδ' ὑπήκοοι.
 Βασιλεία: πῶς ἂν οὔν μένοιεν ἄνδρας πολεμίους ἐπήλυδας;
 Χορός: ὥστε Δαρείου πολὺν τε καὶ καλὸν φθεῖραι στρατόν.

Queen: And who is the shepherd in charge, lord over the [allied Greek] army?

Chorus: They are called neither slaves nor subjects of a man.

Queen: So how might they stand their ground against a hostile invasion force?

Chorus: Just as they destroyed the large and magnificent army of Darius.⁶⁵

Victory over the Persians justified the democracy of Athens, a more egalitarian form of government which mobilised and galvanised its citizens to fight Persian Asia and the prospect of universal subjection to the Great King.⁶⁶ Greek hoplite warfare epitomised the democratic ideal; in the phalanx, a soldier's shield partially protected his neighbour,

⁶⁵ A similar outlook is present in an episode in book seven of Herodotus' *Histories*. Demaratus, abdicated king of Sparta, advises Xerxes before the Battle of Thermopylae that regardless of how inferior they might be in terms of numbers the Spartans will remain steadfast in battle, inspired by state law to fight courageously to the death for the cause of freedom (Hdt. 7.102.1 – 7.104.5).

⁶⁶ Rosenbloom (2006) 36-37.

meaning that each depended on and fought for the other's survival, a battlefield synergy lost on the slavish, barbarian Persians.

Aeschylus' binary of free Greek versus slavish Persian dehumanises the defeated enemy and its masses of dead, resulting in an arresting paradox. The audience is encouraged, on the one hand, to engage empathetically with the suffering of the Persians in Susa as they mourn their departed loved ones. This empathy is, on the other hand, counteracted by an ambivalence and desensitisation to the horrors of war and death inflicted upon the Persian soldiers. These soldiers were slaves, chattel of the empire, who were, in the eyes of the Greeks, much less important in life and death than free men. Such dehumanisation would have somewhat mitigated the discomfort felt throughout the audience about the slaughter of the Persian army at Salamis, a portion of which were Greeks fighting on the side of the Great King (Hdt. 7.132.1). The majority of these Greeks were Ionians living under Persian rule on the western coast of Anatolia in Asia. After the Persian invasion, the Delian League offensive swiftly moved into Ionia, successfully driving out the Persians. The Ionians though had lived under Lydian and then Persian rule for decades prior, failing in their one concerted effort at revolt. The history of its submission to the Persian yoke enwrapped Ionia in cultural ambiguity. It was a part of *Hellas*, but located in Asia and unable to boast about the same history of defiance to Persian autocracy that became fundamental to the ethno-cultural self-definition of the Athenians and the mainland Greeks in Europe. Ionia's cultural ambiguity is evident in the *Persians*. Aeschylus is silent on the Ionians' inclusion in the Persian fleet at Salamis, omitting them from the Persian catalogue in the parodos. Moreover, his use of the term Ἑλλάς is restricted to the Greek mainland and so does not extend to Ionia.⁶⁷ The Greek presence in Asia is explicitly mentioned only twice in the play. The Ghost of Darius refers to the conquest of Phrygia, Lydia and Ionia by Cyrus the Great (Aesch. *Pers.* 770-771). A little later, the chorus reminisce about the past success of King Darius' imperialism in Ionia (Aesch. *Pers.* 899-900):

καὶ τὰς εὐκτεάνους κατὰ κλῆρον Ἰαόνιον πολυάνδρους
Ἑλλάνων ἐκράτυνε <πόλεις> σφετέραις φρεσίν·

⁶⁷ Garvie (2009) 335. E. Hall (1989) 165; Coleman (1997) 210: n. 25 point out that throughout Athenian drama parts of Asia Minor are frequently included within the concept of *Hellas*. For the purposes of the *Persians*, however, the scope of *Hellas* is reduced to the mainland.

And the prosperous and populous <cities> of the Greeks throughout
the Ionian region he [Darius] ruled by his will.⁶⁸

Of the different Greek peoples inhabiting western Anatolia, the Ionians meant the most to Athens. The official narrative of Ionian history had established Athens as Ionia's mother-city, the source of its earliest colonists. After the region was freed from Persian rule, the Ionians' political allegiance changed but not their status. In their administration of the Delian League, the Athenians appropriated many Persian instruments of empire. As a result, the Ionians were still obliged to pay tribute and to provide troops and resources for allied war efforts.⁶⁹ Athens broadcast its historical connections with Ionia, promoting the idea of *syggenia* between itself and its Ionian allies. This propaganda aimed to obscure the fact that the Ionians, like the other members of the Delian League, were subordinates of an Athenian empire.⁷⁰

Historians have identified a negative bias against Ionian cultural character in some fifth-century Athenian public discourse. A recent history of subjugation to Persian autocracy, which also involved direct military action against their Athenian kinsmen, meant that the Ionians became associated with Medism, problematising their claim to Greekness. A fragment of the comic poet Callias, for instance, mocks the decadent lifestyle and slavish temperament of the Ionians, seen to typify the peoples of Asia who lived under Persian monarchy: τί γὰρ ἡ τρυφερὰ καὶ καλλιτράπεζος Ἰωνία εἴφ' ὅτι πρόσσει; ("For what about Ionia, tell me, how is the land of luxury and fine dining doing?" – Callias, *Cyclopes*, F 8, *ap.* Ath. 12.524f = Storey).⁷¹ It is unclear when exactly and to what extent this cynical view of Ionian cultural character gained traction in Athens. It possibly surfaced soon after the Ionians had engaged in combat against the Greeks at Salamis, before increasing in influence during the following decades.⁷² Euripides' tragedy *Ion* (c. 414 BC), in contrast, embraces the premise of Athens' historical and cultural connections with Ionia, and shows that some Athenians had a

⁶⁸ In these two instances, the Persian characters use the word "Ionian" to designate the Ionian Greek city-states of western Anatolia specifically; elsewhere in the play the word denotes Greeks in general: see Aesch. *Pers.* 178, 563, 950-951, 1011, 1025.

⁶⁹ Raaflaub (2009) 89-124.

⁷⁰ For discussion of the significance of Ionia in Athens' Delian League propaganda, see Podlecki (1966) 20-21; Castriota (2000) 443-445, 472-473, 478; J. M. Hall (2002) 68; Constantakopoulou (2007) 68; Crielaard (2009) 73-74; Raaflaub (2009) 89-124.

⁷¹ Cf. Thuc. 6.82.4; Ephorus, *FGrH* 70, F 3, *ap.* Ath. 12.523e; see also Herodotus' negative opinion of the Ionians, e.g. Hdt. 1.143.1-3, 4.142.1.

⁷² For this argument, see Toynbee (1954) 718; Emlyn-Jones (1980) 1-2; Lewis and Wigen (1997) 21-22; Rosenbloom (2006) 30; Crielaard (2009) 57, 73-74; Greaves (2010) 225-226.

more positive outlook on the Ionians.⁷³ The text of the *Persians* provides only a slight and indirect insight into how Aeschylus and his contemporaries perceived Ionian Greek culture and identity. The play's two references to Ionia relate to its history of subjugation to the Achaemenid Persian Empire in Asia (Aesch. *Pers.* 770-771, 899-900). At line 899, the adjectives εὐκτεάνους (“prosperous”) and πολυάνδρους (“populous”) are used to describe the Ionian *poleis*. Both words fit Ionia into the overall emphasis on Persian Asia's vastness and immense material wealth (Aesch. *Pers.* 3, 74-75, 532-534, 770-771, 899). The subsequent lines hint at Ionia's changing cultural and political landscape at a time when the Delian League had driven Persian hegemony out of the region and back into Asia's interior (Aesch. *Pers.* 905-907). Fighting against the Ionians at Salamis would have been raw in the Athenian collective memory when Aeschylus produced the *Persians*, perhaps to such an extent that he felt it better not to mention their participation directly. In the context of the story acted out on stage, the Ionians were Greeks from Persian Asia whose collaboration with the Great King, wittingly or not, blemished their cultural character. Equally, Rosenbloom detects in the *Persians* a subtextual commentary on Athenian cultural character. He asserts that the performance of the play when Athens was beginning to form its own empire with conquests in Thrace and the Aegean should be seen as a statement of ambivalence toward the city-state's supplantation of Persian authority. An admonitory function is plausible, the portrayal of Persian tragedy at Salamis warning the Athenians not to repeat the hubristic mistakes of the Persians in their own pursuit of empire.⁷⁴

In the *Persians*, the contraposition of Persian Asia and mainland Greece coalesces with a land versus sea binary, which Pelling and also Bakola believe to be a cardinal motif of the play.⁷⁵ Both land and sea seemingly fit within the purview of the Persian Empire's military and political domination. In the parodos, the chorus highlight the dual nature of the Persian army's composition, cataloguing its array of land and naval forces (Aesch. *Pers.* 18-19, 39, 54-55, 83). In addition, they state that King

⁷³ See Zacharia (2008) 32-33.

⁷⁴ See Rosenbloom (2006) 97. Cf. Aeschylus' later tragedy the *Suppliants* (c. 460s BC), which blurs the boundaries between Greeks and barbarians. In the play, the Danaids of Egypt are different in appearance from the Greeks and practise exotic customs, but they also have Argive lineage from their father Danaus. The people of Argos choose to protect the Danaids, preventing the proposed forced marriages to their Egyptian cousins – the Danaids are simultaneously Greeks and barbarians: for discussion, see Turner (2001) 27-28, 40-41; Mitchell (2006) 206-220; Papadodima (2014) 258.

⁷⁵ Pelling (1997a) 2, 6-7; Bakola (2014) 27-28 analyse the land versus sea binary, but are largely unconcerned with its relation to the contraposition of Persian Asia and mainland Greece; see also Haubold (2012) 14-18.

Xerxes roams over the earth διχόθεν, πεζονόμοις ἔκ τε θαλάσσης/ ὄχυροῖσι πεποιθῶς/ στυφελοῖς ἐφέταις (“in both ways, trusting in strong and hard generals, commanding on land and on sea” – Aesch. *Pers.* 76-78). The symbol of the yoke initially casts the Persians as tamers of the sea, as they cross the Hellespont by binding the landmasses of Europe and Asia together via a man-made land bridge built of boats (Aesch. *Pers.* 65-70, 109-113, 130-131, 736). The chorus use a nautically themed metaphor to convey the fearsome appearance of the Persian army (Aesch. *Pers.* 87-92):

δόκιμος δ' οὔτις ὑποστάς
 μεγάλῳ ρεύματι φωτῶν
 ὄχυροῖς ἔρκεσιν εἴργειν
 ἄμαχον κύμα θαλάσσης·
 ἀπρόσοιστος γὰρ ὁ Περσᾶν
 στρατὸς ἀλκίφρων τε λαός.

No one has the ability to bring to a halt
 a great flood of men
 and with a firm defence to shut out
 the unconquerable surge of the sea;
 for the Persian army and
 their valiant host are difficult to handle.

This metaphor augurs a great irony and tragedy. The naval engagement at Salamis, the main backdrop to the play, results in κακῶν πέλαγος μέγα (“a great sea of troubles” – Aesch. *Pers.* 433-434) for the Persians.⁷⁶ Most of their warships are wrecked (Aesch. *Pers.* 408-428) and countless lives are lost to the sea, including many of the finest Persian commanders (Aesch. *Pers.* 302-317, 595-597). Xerxes and all the other survivors are forced to retreat from the sea back into the interior of Asia (Aesch. *Pers.* 480-514, 565-567).

As the play progresses, the reality of the disaster at Salamis hits home. The sea becomes associated not with Persian power, but instead with allied Greek power and Persian failure. Dialogue between the messenger and the chorus in the first episode

⁷⁶ Cf. Simon. F 1, *ap.* Plut. *Them.* 15.4 = Campbell, which refers to the Battle of Salamis as the greatest exploit on the sea ever carried out by either Greeks or barbarians.

reveals the Persians' calamitous experience of Greek naval expertise (Aesch. *Pers.* 272-279):

Ἄγγελος: οὐδὲν γὰρ ἦρκει τόξα, πᾶς δ' ἀπώλλυτο
λεῶς δαμασθεῖς ναΐοισιν ἐμβολαῖς.

Χορός: ὁτοτοτοῖ, φίλων
πολύδονα σώμαθ' ἀλιβαφῇ
κατθανόντα λέγεις φέρεσθαι
πλαγκταῖς ἐν διπλάκεσσιν.

Ἄγγελος: πλήθουσι νεκρῶν δυσπότηως ἐφθαρμένων
Σαλαμῖνος ἄκται πᾶς τε πρόσχωρος τόπος.

Messenger: For our bows and arrows were of no help, and the whole host
perished overpowered by ramming ships.

Chorus: Otototoi, our loved ones'
dead bodies are floating, you say,
soaked and often buffeted by salt water,
wearing cloaks that roam about in the waves.

Messenger: The shores of Salamis and the entire neighbouring region
are full of corpses ill-fatedly slaughtered.

Aeschylus depicts the Persians as discombobulated and helpless at Salamis. They shriek and wail in the water, drowning amongst the wreckage of their ships (Aesch. *Pers.* 424-427, 433-434).⁷⁷ The sea is the site of terrible Persian suffering in the play (Aesch. *Pers.* 576, 907, 945), and the agents of that suffering, the chorus emphasise, are expertly piloted allied Greek warships (Aesch. *Pers.* 558-563):

πεζούς τε καὶ θαλασσίους
ὁμόπτεροι κυανώπιδες
νᾶες μὲν ἄγαγον, ποποῖ
νᾶες δ' ἀπώλεσαν, τοτοῖ
νᾶες πανωλέθροισιν ἐμβολαῖς,

⁷⁷ In his account of the Battle of Salamis, Herodotus points out that the Persians are inept swimmers compared to the Greeks (Hdt. 8.89.1-2); for discussion, see E. Hall (1994) 44-80; Haubold (2012) 15.

διὰ δ' ἰαόνων χέρας.

Both infantrymen and seamen
the equal-winged, dark-faced
ships brought them, popoi
and ships destroyed them, totoi
ships with all-destructive ramming,
and steered by Greek (“Ionian”) hands.

As shown previously, the ancient Greeks perceived the sea and seafaring as paramount to their way of life. The Mediterranean Sea and its constituent subdivisions, especially the Aegean, facilitated ancient Greek culture, experience, interconnections, and in the case of Salamis – military success. The *Persians* was performed during the early phase of Delian League expansion, when Athens seized control of the Aegean Sea from the Persians all the way to the Ionian coast. Christy Constantakopoulou argues that in the fifth century BC the Aegean became a world of Athenian Greek navigation, mobility and empire. As part of its Delian League propaganda, Athens appropriated an image as the central island of the Aegean. It thereby positioned itself as the new Delos, the mythological birthplace of Apollo, which lay in the middle of the sea halfway between Europe and Asia.⁷⁸ Delos was the initial meeting place for the Delian League and also the site of its treasury, before Pericles transferred it to Athens in 454 BC. The Persians’ disaster upon the waters off Salamis, as portrayed by Aeschylus, sets them apart as the antithesis of the victorious Athenians and their allies, masters of the sea. The Achaemenid rulers controlled an empire that spanned across the vast *terra firma* of Asia. The setting of the *Persians* in the empire’s capital Susa locates the Achaemenids in the interior of the continent, far inland of any sea and far removed from the waters off Salamis where the fleet was annihilated. The section of Persian Asia in closest proximity to Salamis and most orientated toward the sea was the Greek inhabited coast of Anatolia that had been wrested from Achaemenid control in the aftermath of the Persian invasion. Upon their retreat from the Greek mainland, the Persians found the bridge of boats that they had constructed between Europe and Asia destroyed (Hdt. 8.117.1 – 8.120.1). The boats had functioned as a terrestrial land bridge and continental

⁷⁸ Constantakopoulou (2007) 3, 5, 20.

connector, enabling the bulk of the Persian army to cross the narrows of the Hellespont on foot. The destruction of the bridge came to signify the Persians' failure to extend their territory beyond Asia to mainland Greece, and the *hubris* of Xerxes' attempt to subject both land and sea to his domination.⁷⁹ This "mainland" was a landform defined by its significant coastal portion; hence, in the *Persians*, mainland Greece is the geographic opposite of the Persians' terrestrial empire in Asia. The land versus sea binary helps explain how Athens, the great sea power of the mainland, subdued at Salamis the barbarian threat that emanated out from the Achaemenid homeland deep within the interior of the Asian continent.

Conclusion

The *Persians* explores the Persian experience of the Battle of Salamis and its after-effects. Aeschylus' presentation of the Persian defeated engages with Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. His perspective is Athenocentric, focussed on Athens' military and cultural leadership of an alliance of Greeks who were victorious over a barbarian multitude at Salamis. The notion of Greek-barbarian polarity in the *Persians* operates in accordance with a specific geographical framework. The play positions mainland Greece, home to Athens, in opposition with the continent Asia, which is elided with the Achaemenid Persian Empire. The Greek mainland and Persian Asia are each ascribed distinctive martial characteristics. Persian Asia initially appears formidable because of its immense quantity of soldiers, who, despite their proclivity for the bow, are also recognised as worthy opponents. Aeschylus describes the Athenian-led Greeks as drastically outnumbered, but staunch defenders of the mainland. Although ostensibly overmatched, the Greeks are advantaged in other ways. The Greek hoplite is a peerless combatant, and the Athenians are experts in naval warfare. From the standpoint of the play's Persian protagonists, the failure of Persian Asia to absorb Athens and the Greek mainland is a distressing and unexpected tragedy. Aeschylus integrates political content into his geographic framework for Greek-barbarian polarity. All in Asia are slaves to the autocratic rule of the Persian king, equivalent to the barbarians who comprise Athens' slave populace. On the western frontier of Asia, submission to the Persian yoke stigmatises the Athenians' Ionian kinsmen as slavish and decadent. Across the

⁷⁹ Bakola (2014) 26-28 argues that by yoking land and sea together, Xerxes disrupts the order of the natural environment, an act of *hubris* that he is punished for in the inhospitable waters off Salamis.

Hellespont in Europe, mainland Greece decisively resists the yoke. Athens is the champion of allied Greek freedom, its democracy romanticised as the polar opposite of Persian Asia's oppressive monarchy. Conversely, the Athenians' subsequent path toward empire puts them at risk of becoming barbarians to the rest of the Greeks, victims of another oppressive political regime. Aeschylus also inserts a land versus sea binary into the geographic framework for Greek-barbarian polarity. Athens and mainland Greece are associated with the sea, while Persian Asia is associated with *terra firma*. The binary rationalises the allied Greek navy's triumph over a barbarian enemy that had marched overland and into Europe from the interior of the Asian continent, marshalling the Ionian Greeks and all the other subject peoples along the way, only to suffer a tragic defeat upon the sea – the domain of the allied Greeks.

The next chapter of the thesis is a case study of Herodotus' *Histories*. It analyses the text's exploration of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities and considers how Herodotus perceives geographical concepts, particularly the continents and the *oikoumene*, to influence the process of ethno-cultural self-definition.

The Herodotean Perspective: Geography and Ethno-cultural Identity in the *Histories*

Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέως ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὥς μήτε τὰ
γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα
μεγάλα τε καὶ θαυμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι
ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην
ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.

This inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus is set forth here so that the things achieved among men may not fade over time, and that the great and marvellous deeds, some displayed by Greeks and others by barbarians, may not be without fame, and also among other things for what reason they waged war against one another (Hdt. 1.1.1).

The above preface to Herodotus' *Histories* addresses the conceptual division of humankind into Greeks and barbarians. Throughout the work, Herodotus shows a keen interest in all non-Greek peoples; though, the ones of paramount concern to his narrative's plot trajectory are those who populate the Achaemenid Persian Empire in Asia. He represents the empire and its antecedents as military antagonists of the Greeks in protracted hostilities that culminate with the Persian invasion of mainland Greece. After the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC, the first Persian assault across the Aegean, the topic of conflict with Persia came to dominate the Greek recollection of their recent past.¹ Herodotus was writing during the early stages of the Peloponnesian War, at a time when the oldest generation of men in Athens were still identified as "marathon fighters" (Ar. *Ach.* 181).² The principal themes and methodology of the *Histories* are disputed. As the preface shows, the subject matter is composite. Herodotus' ultimate aim is to provide a comprehensive record of the Persian invasion of mainland Greece, detailing the background, causes, and sequence of events that occurred. The narrative slowly builds up to the Persian invasion, with the first four books encompassing a historical, ethnographical and geographical account of the whole *oikoumene*, which explains how

¹ See Balcer (1983) 260; Georges (1994) 117.

² Fornara (1971) 75-91.

the Greeks and Persians arrived on a collision path to war.³ Persian imperialist expansionism is the chief organising principle of the account. In books five through nine, the same universal gaze remains, albeit in a slightly diluted form. The ethnographic and geographic material in these books provides depth and context for the storyline of the Persian invasion, from the Ionian Revolt prelude to the closing acts at Plataea and Mycale.⁴

Herodotus presents the Persian Wars as a defining event in the development of Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. The subject of ethno-cultural identity construction is a major subplot in the *Histories*, with numerous ethnographical discussions positioning the notion of collective Greek identity within a global framework. Herodotus' exploration of Greekness operates on two connected geographical planes, the oecumenical and the continental. He contours the Greeks in specific relation to the Achaemenid Persian Empire in Asia, the Scythians in Europe, and the Egyptians in Libya, but also in universal relation to all barbarian peoples en masse. This chapter is a study of the relationship between geography and ethno-cultural identity in the *Histories*. It analyses Herodotus' interpretation of the Greek sense of place in the world, giving detailed consideration to the nexus which he creates between the continents, the concept of *Hellas*, and the wider *oikoumene*. Other fifth-century prose works are used to provide the analysis with a comparative element. There is a disconnect in Herodotean scholarship in regard to how relevant the dichotomies of Self versus Other, and East versus West are to the depiction of Greeks and barbarians in the *Histories*. Some commentators view Herodotus' perspective as overwhelmingly Hellenocentric and Orientalist, rendering the Achaemenid Persian Empire in Asia as a homogeneous and distinctive barbarian world.⁵ Others associate his work with a substantive challenge to

³ The division of the *Histories* into books was not the work of Herodotus himself. The divisions were chosen later because each correlates with a shift in the path of the narrative. The discussion of the *Histories* in this chapter moves sequentially from book to book, while bringing together the thematic strands relevant to geography and ethno-cultural identity that span the work in its entirety.

⁴ Pohlenz (1937) 5, 20, 30 cited the hostility between East and West as the principal theme of the *Histories*; Immerwahr (1966) 17-18, 41-42 argued that the principal theme is the growth of Persian power in Asia and its attempted expansion westward into Europe and mainland Greece; Fornara (1971) 26-29, 87 suggested that ethnography is Herodotus' primary focus. One fundamental theme emerges as an outgrowth, the means by which Persian imperialism subjugated Asia and the Greek quest for freedom from this imperialism; Drews (1973) 71-76 identified several important themes, including the rise and fall of Persia, East versus West, and the story of the Great Event; Dueck (2012) 36 asserts that a major concern for Herodotus is to provide a comprehensive idea of the spatial extent of the Persian Empire.

⁵ Pohlenz (1937) 5, 20, 30; Drews (1973) 71-76; Armayor (1978) 1-9; Said (1978) 21, 54-58, 68; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987a) xi-xiv; (1987b) 33-45; Hartog (1988) 10-11, 193-194, 210-215; E. Hall (1989) 73, 99, 102; Coleman (1997) 188; Hartog (2001) 79-82; Isaac (2004) 302; Brosius (2006) 76; Pagden (2008) x-xvii; Kim (2009) 10; Meier (2012) 26-28, 37.

the anti-Persian and anti-barbarian prejudices within Greek society.⁶ In the following analysis, I take a different approach, using the geographical aspects of ethno-cultural identity construction in the *Histories* to demonstrate that Herodotus recognises Greek and barbarian to be unstable, fluid categories of identification. The divide between the two is porous and frequently traversed. Skinner's synopsis of the irregularity of Greek-barbarian antithesis in the *Histories* is congruent with my assessment:

On the one hand the work is undoubtedly a celebration of the Greek victory over the barbarian even if this is via a "warts and all" portrayal that shows Greeks, whether singly or collectively, in a less than positive light... Questions of power and discourse are equally prevalent, as we have already seen, but this complicated back history of identity discourse cannot easily be arranged into a single, overarching narrative of Orient versus Occident, Greek versus barbarian.⁷

Ethno-cultural Identity Construction in Herodotean Ethnography and Geography: Books 1-4

The *Histories* are a product of the second half of the fifth century BC, when Ionian Greek prose writing on the sciences, medicine, ethnography and history was flourishing. Herodotus was especially influenced by the large Hippocratic corpus, which provided contemporary diagnoses of the health and character of human populations and environments.⁸ The principles of cultural relativism underline Herodotus' ethnographical research, suggesting the influence of Athens' sophistic movement also.⁹

⁶ Baldry (1965) 4-5, 16-19; Lateiner (1989) 141, 152; Georges (1994) 123-124; Pelling (1997b) 50-66; Harrison (2000b) 42; Thomas (2000) 4, 14-16, 28-29, 44-45, 90, 102; Munson (2001) 3-8; Thomas (2001) 213-214, 228; Briant (2002a) 7-8; (2002b) 193-210; Munson (2005) 1-6, 10, 14; Flower (2006) 275; Gruen (2006) 296; Irwin (2006) 6-17; Harrison (2007) 55; Varisco (2007) 65; Price and Thonemann (2010) 117; Gruen (2011b) 20, 35, 53-56; Harrison (2011b) 116-123; Skinner (2012) 248; Vlassopoulos (2013) 49-56; Munson (2014) 352.

⁷ Skinner (2012) 248.

⁸ Thomas (2000) 1-4, 28 argues that the *Histories* are informed throughout by Hippocratic ideas about health and ethnography, and consequently Herodotus should be viewed in the context of Ionian and East Greek science of the latter part of the fifth century BC.

⁹ For discussion of Herodotus' cultural relativism and the role that the sophists played in the development of the doctrine, see Baldry (1965) 1; Coleman (1997) 197; Munson (2001) 163; Whitmarsh (2004) 167; Munson (2005) 4, 66, 77; Rood (2006) 298-299; Thomas (2006) 69-70; Zacharia (2008) 24; Thomas (2011) 239-246; Munson (2014) 352. Redfield (2002) 25-32 argues that Herodotus writes as a tourist, rather than as an anthropologist. Even though he is conscious that *nomoi* are culturally relative, he is not a strict ethical relativist. He still sees the world from a Greek standpoint, disapproving of certain *nomoi*,

Herodotus was well-placed to digest ideas and knowledge from all over *Hellas* and the *oikoumene*. He hailed from the Dorian city of Halicarnassus, sited in the region of Caria which bordered on Ionia in southwest Asia Minor. In spite of its Dorian Greek origin, Halicarnassus was a *polis* in which Ionic language and culture, Persian overlordship, and intermarriage between Greeks and barbarians native to the region created a multicultural vibe.¹⁰ Herodotus spent time travelling widely throughout western Anatolia, Egypt, and parts of the Persian Empire. While writing the *Histories*, he migrated to Athens for several years and then to the colony of Thurii in southern Italy, where he died. In Herodotus' later years, the Peloponnesian War began, impacting his approach to the issue of Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. This prolonged and brutal internecine conflict made the Greeks barbarians to one another, pitting Athens against Sparta, and Ionians against Dorians. The war motivated Greek intellectuals, including Herodotus, Thucydides, Euripides and others, to give additional thought to the meanings of "Greek" and "barbarian."¹¹ Panhellenic sentiment was most enthusiastically proclaimed in moments of wartime crisis, such as the Persian invasion and the Peloponnesian War. Paradoxically, it was in these moments that the notion of collective Greek identity was also at its most vulnerable and contentious, inciting strong and diverse opinions about the extent to which various different groups of Greeks felt themselves to be united together as an ethno-cultural community.¹²

Once Herodotus has set the scene of conflict between Greeks and Persians in the opening lines of the *Histories*, he continues the proem and accords geography a seminal role throughout (Hdt. 1.1.1 – 1.5.4).¹³ Alonso-Núñez's analysis of the proem is indicative of the scholarly orthodoxy, which sees Herodotus' depiction of the Europe-Asia divide as symbolising the ethnocentric and xenophobic notion of Greek-Persian/barbarian antagonism:

The idea of opposition between Asia and Europe, i.e., Persians and Greeks, is fundamental to the historical thought of Herodotus, as already appears in

such as those that oppress a society's free members – he observes foreign peoples in order to teach, not to learn.

¹⁰ See Thomas (2000) 1-10; Mitchell (2007) 57-59.

¹¹ On the influence that the Peloponnesian War had on ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition, see esp. Baldry (1965) 33, 46-47; Fornara (1971) 39-40, 75-91; Munson (2001) 3-4; Heckel (2008) 3.

¹² In the play *Peace* (421 BC), Aristophanes advocates for panhellenic political unity, arguing that the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta has weakened the Greeks and invited the Persians to launch a new invasion: see Ar. *Peace*, 107-108; cf. Gorg. F 29, 43, *ap.* Philostr. *VS*, 1.9.4-5 = Graham.

¹³ For some discussion of geography's seminal role in the proem, see Vasunia (2012) 183-198.

the introduction (chs. 1-5) of the *Histories*, which places the origin of their rivalry in mythical times.¹⁴

The proem presents Herodotus' interpretation of the Persian version of past events that led to a centuries-long feud eventually concluding with the Persian Wars. The feud played out across the sea and continents. The Persians, Herodotus states, identify Phoenician traders as the initial transgressors, who committed a "moral wrongdoing" (ἄδίκημα) in ancient times by sailing from the Levant to Argos on the Greek mainland, abducting the king's daughter Io, and carrying her off to Egypt (Hdt. 1.1.2 – 1.2.1). Some Greeks, possibly from Crete, retaliated by landing at Tyre and abducting the king's daughter Europa (Hdt. 1.2.1), an ἄδίκημα which squared the ledger between Greeks and barbarians. The Greeks then committed a second offense, with the Argonauts stealing away Princess Medea from her native Colchis (Hdt. 1.2.2). The Trojan prince Paris responded in kind by bringing Helen of Sparta, wife of Menelaus, back to Troy as his lover (Hdt. 1.3.1-2). In other sources, the theft of women is regarded as a singularly barbarian ἄδίκημα, with Paris' abduction of Helen the most infamous example. Euripides describes Greek maidens as the θήραμα βαρβάρου πλάτας ("prey of barbarian sailors") and refers to the barbarian robbery and rape of wives from *Hellas* (Eur. *Hel.* 192-193; *IA*, 1265, 1380). In the proem of the *Histories*, however, Greeks are equally perpetrators of this ἄδίκημα. According to Herodotus, the Persians claim that the Greeks were to blame for the next phase of the feud – the Trojan War (Hdt. 1.4.1). They, moreover, juxtapose the Trojan War with the Persian Wars, understanding these military engagements and the preceding abductions in relation to an intercontinental frame of reference – during the Trojan War, the Greeks invaded Asia and during the Persian Wars, the Persians invaded Europe (Hdt. 1.4.1). The Persian account of these intercontinental transgressions blurs the boundaries between Greeks and barbarians. Both parties are guilty of moral wrongdoing, without making any reparations (δίκαι). From the Persian point of view though, the Greeks were most at fault for besieging Troy, escalating the feud from theft of women to all-out war (Hdt. 1.4.1 – 1.5.1). Herodotus offers no challenge to the Persian version of events, or their allotment of

¹⁴ Alonso-Núñez (2003) 147; see also van Paassen (1957) 96; Immerwahr (1966) 17-18, 148; de Romilly (1992) 2-4; Kaplan (1999) 2, 11-13; Hartog (2001) 81-82; Brosius (2006) 76; Pagden (2008) x-xvii; Meier (2012) 26-28, 37.

greatest blame to the Greeks (Hdt. 1.5.3). The Greeks in the proem, therefore, appear just as immoral and hubristic as the barbarians, if not more so.¹⁵

Herodotus bookends his report of the centuries-long feud between Greeks and barbarians with the declaration that the Persians considered the Asian continent to be their imperial possession (Hdt. 1.4.4):

τὴν γὰρ Ἀσίην καὶ τὰ ἐνοικέοντα ἔθνη βάρβαρα οἰκισθῆναι οἱ
Πέρσαι, τὴν δὲ Εὐρώπην καὶ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἡγνῆναι κεχωρίσθαι.

For the Persians claim as their own Asia and all the barbarian tribes dwelling in it, and Europe and the Greeks they believe to be separate from them.

The standard interpretation of this passage is that it projects Greek thinking onto the Persians. The geographic information in surviving Achaemenid royal inscriptions suggests that the Persians lacked a concept equivalent to the Greeks' "continent" and did not recognise any potential spatial restrictions to Persian rule – the world was theirs for the taking. The "Daiva Inscription" of Xerxes, for instance, claims authority over the Greeks (*Yauna*) across the "Bitter River," alluding to the king's military campaigns which aimed to extend Persian dominion throughout the Aegean and across into mainland Greece.¹⁶ Johannes Haubold argues that the Persians' stated claim to Asia may have reflected an actual Persian take on Homer's *Iliad* and the Trojan War. Herodotus explains that during his march to mainland Greece King Xerxes visited Troy, where he learnt about what once happened there, offered sacrifices, and made libations

¹⁵ Skinner (2012) 250 comments on how Herodotus uses the account of ancient intercontinental transgressions to destabilise the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity from the proem onwards: "We have only to scratch the surface, however, in the case of the *Histories*, to discover occasions on which this (apparently) neat polarity is cast into doubt. From the very outset we have the blurring of boundaries that takes place as hapless maidens are transported the length and breadth of the Mediterranean in a sequence that links Argos and Phoenicia, Troy and Colchis, providing, in the process, aetiologies for both Europe and the Medes"; see also Schwabl (1961) 3; Lateiner (1985) 88-92; Boedeker (1988) 42-48; Lateiner (1989) 127-129; Romm (1998) 83-85; Thomas (2000) 99-100; Munson (2001) 85-86; Desmond (2004) 26, 33-34; Romm (2006) 178, 187; (2010) 78-79, 84-86.

¹⁶ Haubold (2012) 13; for discussion of further inscriptions which demonstrate the Persian ambition to rule the whole world, see Hirsch (1985) 80; Kuhrt (1995) 676-678; Prontera (1998) 80; Kaplan (1999) 14-20; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001) 323-346; Briant (2002a) 180; Tuplin (2004) 155-157; Brosius (2006) 32; Haubold (2007) 57; Kuhrt (2007) 5-6, 135, 242, 469; Lane Fox (2007) 268; Rhodes (2007) 32; Collins (2008) 137; Harrison (2011a) 65; Prontera (2011) 189; Thomas (2011) 246; Rollinger (2013) 93-95; Harrison (2014) 13-14.

to the heroes (Hdt. 7.43.1-2). Xerxes forthwith envisioned himself as the avenger of Priam, and his campaigns against the Greeks as a retributive continuation of the Trojan War.¹⁷ It would have made sense for him to use the *Iliad* as propaganda to strengthen the loyalty of the Ionians in his army. Miletus had reportedly been an ally of Troy in the Bronze Age (Hom. *Il.* 2.867-867), providing a precedent for the pan-Asian force that Xerxes was assembling to attack the Greeks in Europe.¹⁸

Herodotus' delineation of the Asian continent as the bounds of Persian hegemony is consistent with earlier Greek geographical thought. The concept of Persian Asia is also found later in Thucydides' description of the first condition of a treaty signed in 411 BC by the Spartans and Tissaphernes, the Great King's satrap in Lydia and Caria (Thuc. 8.58.2):

χώραν τὴν βασιλέως, ὅση τῆς Ἀσίας ἐστί, βασιλέως εἶναι· καὶ περὶ τῆς χώρας τῆς ἑαυτοῦ βουλευέτω βασιλεὺς ὅπως βούλεται.

The land of the king which is in Asia shall be the king's; and the king shall resolve to do with his own land whatever he wants.

This condition directly related to the circumstances of the Greek *poleis* in Asia Minor, forcing the Spartans to concede these to the Persians and forgo their role as liberator of the Greeks; the Persians, meanwhile, agreed not to extend their empire beyond Asia. That the Spartans felt it necessary to include a condition in the treaty which confined Persian rule to Asia, signals that the Persians themselves, as implied in their royal inscriptions, had imperialist designs on lands beyond the continent, such as mainland Greece. The equation between Achaemenid Persia and Asia as related by Herodotus (Hdt. 1.4.4) becomes irrelevant when juxtaposed with the history of intercontinental transgressions that he details in the proem and throughout the rest of the *Histories*. The Persians' ancient predecessors in Asia ventured across the Aegean, and laid claim to women from the European continent. The Greeks did the same in the opposite direction,

¹⁷ On the Persians' identification with the Trojan cause, see Hdt. 1.4.4: ἀπὸ τούτου αἰεὶ ἡγήσασθαι τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν σφίσι εἶναι πολέμιον ("Ever since this [the Trojan War] they [the Persians] have regarded the Greeks as their enemy"); for discussion, see esp. Dihle (1994) 33; Georges (1994) 64.

¹⁸ Haubold (2007) 47-63. Euripides associates the Trojans with claims to rulership of Asia. In the *Trojan Women*, Andromache hopes to be the mother of a son who rules over Asia's fruitful fields. Additionally, Helen explains that Hera had promised to spread Paris' dominion over Asia and the utmost bounds of Europe: see Eur. *Tro.* 747-748, 927-928; cf. Eur. *Andr.* 159-160, 645-654.

before destroying Trojan power in Asia. In recent history, the Persians had invaded many lands outside of Asia, including Scythia, Egypt, Kush, Carthage, Thrace, Macedonia, and finally mainland Greece. All of these campaigns are recounted in the *Histories*, producing an incisive motif. Persistent intercontinental quarrels, wars and conquests simultaneously establish and problematise the use of the continental boundary lines to categorise the peoples of the *oikoumene* in terms of culture and character, to ascertain where Greeks end and barbarians begin.¹⁹

The complication of geographical and ethno-cultural boundaries continues as Herodotus shifts from the prehistoric transgressions of the proem to a discursive account of Asiatic history and ethnography. He begins by discussing the Lydian monarch Croesus, once ruler of all the peoples living west of the river Halys. Herodotus describes him as βαρβάρων πρῶτος τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν τοὺς μὲν κατεστρέψατο Ἑλλήνων ἐς φόρου ἀπαγωγὴν, τοὺς δὲ φίλους προσεποιήσατο (“the first of the barbarians whom we know subdued some Greeks and took tribute from them, and gained others as his friends” – Hdt. 1.6.2). Those Greeks whom Croesus subdued were the Dorians, Aeolians and Ionians living in Asia Minor (Hdt. 1.6.2, 1.26.1 – 1.27.4); and those with whom he became friends were the Spartans (Hdt. 1.6.2, 1.70.1). Immediately, Croesus navigates his way across the Greek-barbarian divide, concurrently a friend and enemy of the Greeks. As we have seen, the treatment of the Lydians in ancient Greek ethnography was multi-layered, unable to be pinned down as either exclusively negative or positive.²⁰ Herodotus notes that the Lydians have some odd customs, such as their belief that it is a great shame for even a man to be seen naked, and their prostitution of female children (Hdt. 1.10.3, 1.94.1); overall though, they share many common *nomoi* with the Greeks (Hdt. 1.74.6, 1.94.1-3). Croesus himself cultivates the image of a philhellene through his renowned patronage of the Delphic Oracle (Hdt. 1.46.2 – 1.56.3, 1.85.1-2, 1.90.4 – 1.91.6). He follows the example set by Gyges, the first Lydian king of the Mermnad dynasty and the first to send offerings to Delphi (Hdt. 1.13.1 – 1.14.3, 1.19. 2, 1.25.2). At his capital Sardis, Croesus hosts wise men from all over *Hellas*, including Solon of Athens (Hdt. 1.29.1). Superior intellect and freedom from foolishness are traits exemplified by Solon and said to have

¹⁹ Cf. Euripides’ *Bacchae*, in which the boundary between Europe and Asia is erased, as the inhabitants of each incessantly to and fro between the continents: for analysis of the intercontinental exchanges in the play, see Saïd (2001) 95.

²⁰ See Drews (1973) 5; Emlyn-Jones (1980) 111; J. M. Hall (2002) 119; Crielaard (2009) 59; Gunter (2009) 58; Kim (2009) 125-134; Skinner (2012) 89-90.

helped distinguish Greeks from barbarians (Hdt. 1.60.3; Eur. *Bacch.* 482-483). In an initial contrast with Solon, Croesus shows poor judgement. When Solon asserts that Croesus is not the happiest of all men in the world, because the happiness (ὄλβος) of a man's life cannot be judged until it is known if he has ended his life well, the Lydian king rashly rejects the verdict (Hdt. 1.30.2 – 1.33.1). He then misinterprets an oracle forewarning that should he invade Persia, he will destroy a great empire – his own (Hdt. 1.33.1, 1.53.3). It is not until after the tragic death of his son and facing the possibility of his own death at the hands of Cyrus the Great that Croesus realises the truth in Solon's words – that human fortune is constantly unstable (Hdt. 1.86.3-5).²¹ He also later accepts his misinterpretation of the oracle and uses his past tribulations to provide some sage counsel to Cyrus on several occasions (Hdt. 1.89.1-3, 1.91.6, 1.155.3-4). Croesus' epiphanies, brought on by personal misfortune, allow him to become wiser and less barbarian in his modes of perception. During his discussion of Croesus and the Lydians, Herodotus makes some strategic references to the Cimmerian peoples. He points out that prior to the reign of Croesus, the Scythians had driven the Cimmerian hordes out of Europe's Pontic Steppe and into Asia. The Cimmerians then proceeded to raid Sardis and Ionia, before the Lydians eventually drove them back out of Asia (Hdt. 1.6.3, 1.15.1, 1.16.2). The Cimmerians' intercontinental migrations across a porous Europe-Asia divide provide an analogue for interpreting Croesus' mobile cultural identity.

Croesus ends the freedom of the Greeks who had migrated to Asia. His conquest represents the culmination of centuries of intermittent conflict between the Lydians and the Greeks in Asia (Hdt. 1.15.1 – 1.22.4). Herodotus states that up until then all Greeks had been free. In the time of Croesus, tyrants still dominated political systems all over *Hellas*. Herodotus, for example, briefly mentions Thrasybulus, tyrant of Miletus, and Periander, tyrant of Corinth (Hdt. 1.20.1 – 1.23.1). The freedom lost by the Greeks in Asia must then specifically refer to the earliest subjection of Greek peoples to barbarian rule. After subjugating the Greeks in Asia, Croesus befriends the Spartans, determining that they are the mightiest of the Greeks, more powerful than the Athenians. He reaches this conclusion based on Athens' current domestic strife, its citizens oppressed and split into factions by the actions of their own tyrant Pisistratus (Hdt. 1.59.1 – 1.69.2). The

²¹ The instability of human fortune is an important theme in the *Histories*; Hdt. 1.5.4 states that human prosperity never remains constant, so it is necessary to make mention of both small and great cities alike.

story of Pisistratus makes Athenian tyranny look as objectionable as barbarian tyranny.²² In book one, Herodotus portrays the Athenians as culturally ambiguous. Unlike the Dorian Spartans, the Athenians are autochthonous to the Greek mainland, descended from the Pelasgian people. The Pelasgians, nevertheless, originally spoke a barbarian language, before learning Greek and becoming part of the Greek ethno-cultural community as Athenians (Hdt. 1.56.2 – 1.58.1). This genealogical history of ethnic hybridity is used to create doubt around the hypothesis of Athenian exceptionalism.²³

Croesus' friendship with the Spartan Greeks cuts both ways. It connects him and the Lydians with one of the leading *poleis* in mainland Greece, which would soon go on to mount a gallant resistance against the Persian invasion at Thermopylae. In other instances in the *Histories*, however, the Spartans come across as the most atypical of the Greeks. They, like the Athenians' Pelasgian ancestors, are characterised by their association with certain cultural characteristics foreign to the rest of the Greeks; for example, their diarchy and royal funerary practices (Hdt. 1.65.2, 6.58.1 – 6.60.1).²⁴ At 1.65.2, Herodotus states that the Spartans previously had the worst laws (κακονομώτατοι) of nearly all Greeks, before Lycurgus (c. 900 – 800 BC) reformed them for the better. Herodotus' dichotomous presentation of the Spartans as heroic and at the same time different from the rest of the Greeks is in part a reaction to the Peloponnesian War's challenge to panhellenic consciousness; the Spartans' share of accountability for the war; and their own isolationist perception of all non-Spartans, whether Greek or barbarian, as "outsiders" (Hdt. 9.11.2-3, 9.55.2).²⁵ His insight into the abnormal elements embedded in both Athenian identity and Spartan identity is an

Some cities that were once great have now become small, and some that were once small have now become great.

²² Georges (1994) 168: "Tyrants dominate in both Lydia and the Greek world in this age, and Herodotus' barbarian Asia exists not in itself, but in its relations with the Greeks at a time when most of them were linked to Asia by tyranny and were still incompletely Hellenic"; see also Austin (1990) 289-290, 306; Dewald (2003) 35-39.

²³ For discussion, see Georges (1994) 131-132, 205; Thomas (2001) 233-236; J. M. Hall (2002) 31, 68; Munson (2005) 7-13; Hornblower (2008) 40-41. Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 144 argues that "Because blood ancestry was not *the* criterion for Greek ethnicity, barbarians could become Greeks, but at the same time, because ancestry *was* important, the notion of these barbarians becoming Greek to some extent helped blur the notion of what it is to be Greek. More specifically, it helped deconstruct the dichotomy 'barbarian versus Greek'; it did not invalidate it, but it destabilized it somewhat, thus helping construct the subordinate discourse, in which the dichotomy was qualified—helping articulate the barbarian as both other and significantly comparable to the self. The Pelasgians were tools in these ethnicity discourses."

²⁴ For this argument, see e.g. Hartog (1988) 152; Georges (1994) 206; Pelling (1997b) 54; Munson (2005) 18; Rood (2006) 303.

²⁵ See LSJ (1940) s.v. ξένος: 1189; Cartledge (1993) 47-49; Alonso-Núñez (2003) 148; Munson (2005) 18; Skinner (2012) 250.

extrapolation of the propaganda battle that ensued between the two sides during the Peloponnesian War, which established an Ionian Athens versus Dorian Sparta rhetoric.²⁶ Pelling sums up the dilemma that Herodotus' initial focus on Croesus and his interactions with the Greeks entail for his exploration of ethno-cultural identity within a geographic context:

Herodotus' description of Asia begins with the kingdom which is nearest to Greece, one known to Greek poets five generations before Croesus (1.12.2), and one whose customs are noted as extremely similar to those of the Greeks (1.94.1). In terms of any East/West division, he begins on the cusp, the margins of both parts of the world; and begins by dealing with a figure who is hard to place and who resists description in the easy formulations of Greek/barbarian discourse. Herodotus *begins* by pressing on the boundaries and blurring them, not by establishing them clearly. That does not mean that the categories do not exist, or that they are not important; but they are problematic from the start.²⁷

After examining Croesus and the Lydians, Herodotus turns his gaze to their conquerors, Cyrus and the Persians. He endeavours to reveal who Cyrus was and how the Persians came to be the leaders of Asia (Hdt. 1.95.1). He chronicles a succession of empires that had established extensive hegemonies across the continent.²⁸ First, the Assyrians ruled the interior of Asia (τῆς ἄνω Ἀσίας) for 528 years. The subject nations eventually revolted at the instigation of the Medians and won freedom from slavery (Hdt. 1.95.2). The Medians re-established monarchical rule over all Asia east of the river Halys, notably subjugating the Persians and the Assyrians (Hdt. 1.96.1 – 1.103.3). Herodotus depicts the Median monarchy as authoritarian and inaccessible to its subjects; equally though, the monarchy has a positive impact, uniting the Median tribes, restoring order, and reducing lawlessness. Median rule in Asia was interrupted by

²⁶ Georges (1994) 129-130: "Herodotus subtly redefined the nature and extent of Asianic barbarism in order to explain to the Greeks of his day not only the deep and permanent causes of the enmity between Asiatic barbarians and Greeks, but also the thematically parallel rivalry within Greece itself between the very different peoples of Dorian Sparta and Ionian Athens"; Will (1956) earlier contended that a clear Dorian versus Ionian binary did not exist in fifth-century Greek thought; Alty (1982) 1-14 has refuted this argument.

²⁷ Pelling (1997b) 56.

²⁸ Cf. Ctesias, *Persica*, F 5, *ap.* Diod. Sic. 2.32.1-5 = Llewellyn-Jones and Robson. For discussion of the Greek perspective on the succession of empires in Asia, see Dewald (2003) 33-35.

the Scythians, with Herodotus reiterating the Scythians' pursuit of the Cimmerians across the Europe-Asia divide. Upon their entry into Asia, the Scythians defeated the Medians in battle and took control of Asia (Hdt. 1.103.3 – 1.104.2). As a largely nomadic, mobile people, the Scythians, like their Cimmerian foes, saw continual travel across continental boundaries as of little consequence.²⁹ While in Asia, the Scythians also desired to travel across the Asia-Libya divide, and march against Egypt (Hdt. 1.105.1). The Scythians' reign in Asia lasted for twenty-eight years (c. 634 – 606 BC), until the Medians ousted them and re-gained their empire (Hdt. 1.106.1-2).

In 549 BC, the Medians succumbed to Cyrus, whose further conquests of Lydia and Babylon made the Asian continent Persian territory (Hdt. 1.130.1-3, 1.192.1). Herodotus details Cyrus' most infamous attempt to expand Persian territory beyond Asia. Disregarding warnings to stay in his own land, he bridges the river Araxes, enters Europe and attacks the Massagetae, a nomadic people living east of the Caspian Sea (Hdt. 1.206.1 – 1.208.1). This crossing is not the first nor will it be the last time that a Persian king crosses a natural boundary in an act of aggression (Hdt. 1.189.1-4).³⁰ While in the country of the Massagetae, Cyrus dreams of Darius, his successor to the throne, who is wearing wings on his shoulders that spread across both Asia and Europe. Unbeknownst to Cyrus, the dream foreshadows his own death in Europe at the hands of the Massagetae; Darius' eventual inheritance of the empire in Asia; and future Persian efforts to absorb peoples of Europe into the empire (Hdt. 1.209.1 – 1.210.1).³¹ Cyrus' end amongst the Massagetae is reminiscent of the catastrophe that he had himself inflicted upon Croesus. He is made to look foolish and arrogant for not heeding the portent in his dream, much the same as when Croesus initially refuses to accept Solon's guidance about the instability of human fortune. Despite concluding his account of Persian history for now with a portrait of Cyrus as a misguided barbarian aggressor, Herodotus' general approach to the Persians and their culture is open-minded. He provides a short discussion that highlights some of the idiosyncrasies of Persian

²⁹ Hartog (1988) 32-33.

³⁰ Lateiner (1985) 88-92 argues that a conceptual nexus of boundary and transgression permeates Herodotus' account of Persian expansionism. The transgression of geopolitical boundaries is a moral offense that will eventually lead to failure. It is implied that peoples should remain within the boundaries of their territory and that empires should not bridge the continents; see also Boedeker (1988) 42-48; Lateiner (1989) 127-134; Romm (1998) 83-85; Desmond (2004) 26, 33-34; but cf. Pelling (1997b) 60-66; Munson (2001) 84-86, who assert that Herodotus' emphasis on boundary transgressions undermines any notion of fixed limits for empires and peoples.

³¹ On Cyrus' dream as symbolic of the Persians' imperialist ambitions to expand their empire beyond the confines of Asia, see Harrison (2000b) 108-110; Rhodes (2007) 32.

religion, cuisine, decision-making, social hierarchy and funerary practices (Hdt. 1.131.1 – 1.134.1, 1.38.1 – 1.140.3). He associates the Persians with an ethnocentric worldview, but qualifies it by stating that the Persians, of all men, are the most receptive to the adoption of foreign customs (Ξεινικὰ νόμοις) (Hdt. 1.135.1). Herodotus, furthermore, offers special praise for some specific Persian laws and customs (Hdt. 1.137.1). As with the Lydians, the Persians escape a simple categorisation as barbarian, functioning as seminal specimens in Herodotus' wide-ranging investigation of humanity in all its forms that challenges conventional ethno-cultural boundaries.

Throughout book one, Herodotus depicts all humanity, Greeks and barbarians, as interconnected in space and culture. A major stimulus for this universalising approach is the pluralistic cultural and geopolitical situation of the Greeks in Asia. These Greeks are crucial to the storyline of Persian expansionism. Herodotus first comprehensively accounts for them during a discussion of the Persian subjugation of Ionia.³² The original reaction of the Greeks in Asia to Persian aggression is submissive (Hdt. 1.141.1), contrasting markedly with the sense of duty to Greek freedom from foreign rule attributed to both the Spartans and the Athenians later in the *Histories* (Hdt. 6.49.3). Showing some bias by overlooking his own Dorian Halicarnassus, Herodotus singles out the Ionians in Asia for particular criticism.³³ It is only after Cyrus refuses to let them live under the same terms as Croesus had allowed that most of the Ionians resolve to resist and implore Sparta to assist them (Hdt. 1.141.4). The Milesians, though, had earlier entered into a treaty with Cyrus (Hdt. 1.141.4); while the Phocaeans and the Teians respond to the risk of enslavement by fleeing their *poleis* and emigrating away from Ionia (Hdt. 1.164.3, 1.168.1). Herodotus makes a point of commenting on the temperate climate of Ionia (Hdt. 1.142.1-2), possibly invoking the concept articulated in *Airs, Waters, Places* that a temperate climate engenders a slavish character. The author of this treatise directly associates the concept with the Asian continent and its inhabitants, excluding the ruling Persians (Hippoc. *Aer.* 12.10-18, 16.3-43, 23.13-15). The Ionians in Asia are implicated, helping to explain their original submissiveness to the Persians.³⁴ The cynical view of Ionian cultural character

³² On the significant amount of attention that Herodotus gives the Greeks of Asia in his historical narrative, see esp. Thomas (2004) 27.

³³ During the Peloponnesian War, the Dorian Spartans seized upon this same unflattering image of the Ionians, using it as political propaganda to help validate their conviction of Dorian ethnic superiority over their enemy, the Ionian Athenians: see esp. Alty (1982) 1-14; Zacharia (2008) 27-28; Crielaard (2009) 73-74.

³⁴ See Thomas (2000) 92-97.

continues with Herodotus' statement that at the time of the Persian conquest, the Ionians were held in least regard of all the Greeks. The Ionians in Asia gloried in the name "Ionian," but the Athenians, and others of the Ionian ἔθνος living outside of Asia, became ashamed of it (Hdt. 1.143.2-3). The Ionians in Asia are distinguished from others of Ionian blood and Greeks in general by their celebration of the Panionia religious festival (Hdt. 1.148.1). Herodotus contests the claim of the Ionians in Asia to be the best born of all Ionians by highlighting the impurity of Ionia's ethnic stock.³⁵ They had intermarried with Greeks of many different ancestries and with the local Carians (Hdt. 1.146.1-2, 1.171.4). Even with uncertainty about the homogeneity and status of Ionian ethnicity and culture, Herodotus indicates that all Greek *poleis* in Asia are counted as part of *Hellas* (Hdt. 1.92.1-2, 1.152.3). The Ionians in Asia, he states, eventually put up a gallant fight against the Persian invaders. In due course, they are pummelled into submission and forced to fight as slaves in the Persians' next campaign against the Carians, Caunians and Lycians (Hdt. 1.169.1-2, 1.171.1). As inhabitants of Asia and now as slaves of the Persian Empire, the Ionians occupy the margins of the Greek world.

In book two of the *Histories*, Herodotus switches his focus and sketches a thorough outline of Egyptian geography, ethnography and history. He commences the Egyptian *logos* by briefly mentioning Persia's invasion of Egypt (c. 525 BC) under Cambyses II (r. 530 – 522 BC), son of Cyrus. He then delays the remainder of his tale of Persian expansionism until book three (Hdt. 2.1.1-2). Herodotus' discussion of Egypt further delineates the issue of Greek-barbarian polarity.³⁶ From the outset, he seeks to eschew a decisively Hellenocentric perspective, signalling a preference for using local sources because the Greeks relate many foolish tales about Egypt, unacquainted with the nature and customs of its inhabitants (Hdt. 2.2.5, 2.45.2). As we have seen, Herodotus finds fault with Greek mapmakers who depict Egypt's river Nile as the continental divide between Asia and Libya. He throws into question the validity of conventional continental boundaries. He argues that the Nile splits the Egyptian people

³⁵ Crielaard (2009) 39: "As we saw from Herodotos' description, the Ionians of Asia Minor used exclusive religious gatherings to set themselves apart from their Ionian 'kinsmen' and the other Greeks. A little further on, Herodotos adds that the Ionians of Asia Minor pretended to be 'more truly Ionian, or better born than the other Ionians.' What this statement implies is that ethnic identity could even be a matter of rivalry between competing groups. Herodotos himself argues fiercely against the claims of the Ionians that belonged to the Dodekapolis. This serves to remind us that our source of information is not a distant observer, but a participant in a dispute about contested identities."

³⁶ Thomas (2004) 43-47 considers Herodotus' discussion of Egypt to be fundamental to his understanding of Greek-barbarian antagonism.

asunder, placing some in Asia, others in Libya, while only those living within the Delta occupy Egypt proper. The limits of Egypt, as with any land, should not correspond to major topographical features like the river Nile, but rather to the margins of the entire geographical area inhabited by Egyptian people (Hdt. 2.15.1 – 2.17.2). Herodotus states that to prevent the dismemberment of the Egyptian people the Asia-Libya divide would be better relocated to the isthmus between the Gulf of Suez and the Mediterranean Sea, as that is where Egyptian habitation terminates in the northeast (Hdt. 2.17.1-2). He also suggests that Egypt's southern limit is at Elephantine, as the Ethiopians inhabit the land beyond (Hdt. 2.29.4). Such ethnographically defined boundaries are appropriately more fluid than topographical features, allowing for changes in population spread and the extent of political control. Herodotus applies an analogous fluidity to the boundaries between Egyptian and Greek cultures. He asserts that the Egyptians τὰ πολλὰ πάντα ἔμπαλιν τοῖσι ἄλλοισι ἀνθρώποισι ἐστήσαντο ἥθεά τε καὶ νόμους (“have set in place a whole raft of customs and laws that are contrary to those throughout the rest of the world” – Hdt. 2.35.2), and notes that they perceive anyone who does not speak their language to be barbarians (Hdt. 2.158.5). The Egyptians are, in fact, adverse to all foreign ways of life, especially the Greek: Ἑλληνικοῖσι δὲ νομαίοισι φεύγουσι χράσθαι, τὸ δὲ σύμπαν εἰπεῖν, μηδ' ἄλλων μηδαμὰ μηδαμῶν ἀνθρώπων νομαίοισι (“They [the Egyptians] shrink from the use of Greek customs, and to speak generally, from the customs of all other men” – Hdt. 2.91.1). There is, however, one Egyptian city, Chemmis, whose inhabitants honour the hero Perseus in the Greek manner (Hdt. 2.91.3-6).

The Egyptians for the most part shy away from external influences on their own culture; yet, they have transported their beliefs, values and customs beyond the borders of Egypt and across continental boundary lines.³⁷ During the reign of Psammetichus I (r. 664 – 610 BC), some Egyptians revolted and settled in Ethiopia. The subsequent intermingling familiarised the Ethiopians with Egyptian *nomoi* (Hdt. 2.30.5). Herodotus relates the legend of Sesostrius, the Egyptian pharaoh who centuries prior marched an army through Asia and into Europe, subduing various peoples along the way. On the journey back to Egypt, some of the army remained in Colchis. These Egyptians were the forebears of the Colchian people, which explains why they have Egyptian-like

³⁷ Hartog (1988) 187 argues that the Egyptians, like the Scythians, are an in-between people in the *Histories*. Both are located on the cusp of continental boundary lines, and both continually traverse across these boundary lines by way of cultural exchange, and historical migrations and conquests.

physical characteristics and *nomoi* (Hdt. 2.102.2 – 2.105.1). Egyptian culture was also exported to *Hellas*. Herodotus contends that Greek civic assemblies, processions, ceremonies, sacrifices and the practice of divination are all derived from Egypt (Hdt. 2.56.3 – 2.58.1). He stresses, in particular, the Egyptian influence on Greek religion. In ancient times, the Pelasgian women, ancestors of the Athenians, learnt the rites of the Thesmophoria festival from the daughters of the Egyptian Danaus (Hdt. 2.171.1-3). In addition, the Greeks borrowed from the Egyptians the names of the twelve Olympian gods, the name of the hero Heracles, and the Dionysiac rituals (Hdt. 2.4.2, 2.43.1-3, 2.49.1 – 2.50.1). Herodotus acclaims Pharaoh Amasis II (r. 570 – 526 BC) as a philhellene, who consented for Greeks to settle at Naucratis in the Delta; became a friend and ally of the Greeks at Cyrene; and dedicated offerings to sanctuaries throughout *Hellas* (Hdt. 2.178.1 – 2.182.2). The Egyptian *logos* reinforces and expands upon book one's rendering of the permeability of cultural and geographical boundaries. Egyptian culture transcends the borders of Egypt and the Libyan continent, infiltrating the lives of many different peoples, even the Greeks. By the end of book two, Herodotus has placed as much emphasis on what interconnects the Greeks and the peoples of the *oikoumene* as he has on what separates them.³⁸

Book three resumes the tale of Persian expansionism, beginning with a detailed account of King Cambyses' invasion of Egypt. In the introduction to book two, Herodotus had remarked upon the presence of Ionian and Aeolian Greeks in Cambyses' army (Hdt. 2.1.2). He reiterates this point at the start of book three, which reads like a reproach against those Greeks in Asia for their submission to slavery and participation in Persian imperialist conquest (Hdt. 3.1.1). Cambyses' attack of Egypt parallels his father Cyrus' advance against the Massagetae. Both cross a continental boundary line, marching from Asia to Libya and from Asia to Europe respectively (Hdt. 3.36.3). After the Persians successfully subjugate Egypt, some neighbouring Libyans and Greeks of Cyrenaica surrender themselves as well (Hdt. 3.13.3-4). Cambyses plans three further expeditions against the Carthaginians, Ammonians of Siwa, and Ethiopians (Hdt. 3.17.1), and, like Croesus and Cyrus before him, he is cautioned about the potential perils of his belligerent intentions. The Ethiopian king states that Cambyses is not a just man, and advises that it would be ignorant of him to lead his army against Ethiopia,

³⁸ Vlassopoulos (2013) 56 argues that polarity and universality are not mutually irreconcilable in the *Histories*; additionally, the standard focus on alterity in the scholarship has hidden from sight the various stories told by Herodotus which highlight the similarities between Greeks and barbarians.

coveting a territory other than his own and attempting to enslave a people who have committed no wrong against him (Hdt. 3.21.2-3). Cambyses presses ahead, but during the march to Ethiopia his army runs out of provisions and is forced to withdraw (Hdt. 3.25.4-7). Planned efforts to subdue the Ammonians and Carthaginians also fall short. Herodotus portrays Cambyses as a malevolent monarch who regards his subjects with contempt, even more so than either his predecessor Cyrus or his successor Darius.³⁹ He cites as evidence Cambyses' insults to the Egyptian dead; his mockery of the god's statue at the temple of Hephaestus (Ptah); and his burning of statues in the temple of the Cabeiri at Memphis (Hdt. 3.37.1-3). It is at this point that Herodotus recounts the story of the Greeks and Indians at the court of Darius who disagree regarding the appropriate means by which to dispose of dead bodies (Hdt. 3.38.1-4). The story is used to emphasise that *nomoi* are culturally relative, a fact disregarded by Cambyses, who, when he wantonly disrespects Egyptian religious customs, shows a complete inability to comprehend the offense he has caused. For Herodotus, such behaviour is proof of the king's madness (μᾶνία). He is the most inexcusable of Asia's barbarian despots, impetuously intent on extending his oppressive rule not only beyond the continent, but to the "extremities of the earth" (τὰ ἔσχατα γῆς – Hdt. 3.25.1).⁴⁰

A Greek analogue of Cambyses is Polycrates, tyrant of Ionian Samos from c. 538 to 522 BC. Once finished with Cambyses, Herodotus turns to Polycrates' life and reign, crafting a symmetry between the two rulers. Polycrates quickly became famous throughout *Hellas* for his military undertakings. He had seized absolute power over Samos in a revolt, and then proceeded to conquer many of the Aegean islands, such as Lesbos, and many *poleis* in Asia Minor, such as Miletus (Hdt. 3.39.1-4). As Herodotus recounts, the Spartans decide to wage war against Polycrates at the invitation of Samian citizens discontented by the tyrant's regime. Polycrates, previously allied with Amasis of Egypt, requests support from Cambyses, who agrees to help in return for Polycrates supplying a fleet for the Persian invasion of Egypt (Hdt. 3.44.1-2). The Spartan campaign on Samos results in failure. Herodotus describes it as the "first expedition to Asia" (πρώτην στρατήν ἐς τὴν Ἀσίην) ever made by the Dorian Spartans (Hdt.

³⁹ Hdt. 3.89.3 declares that the Persians considered Cyrus to be a father, ruling in the best interests of the Persian people; Darius, a shopkeeper, exacting exorbitant tribute from throughout the empire; and Cambyses, a despot, difficult and contemptuous in demeanour. For further analysis of the significance of this passage, see Munson (2009) 463.

⁴⁰ Dewald (2003) 33-35 asserts that Cambyses is one of the five major despots in the *Histories* (Croesus, Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes), all of whom begin with great power before falling into misfortune when they overreach themselves and their empires; see also Munson (2009) 463.

3.56.2). This description is telling, since Samos was an island usually thought of as distinct from the adjacent Anatolian mainland and the Asian continent (Aesch. *Pers.* 42-43; Hdt. 1.27.1, 1.96.1, 1.148.1, 1.171.2, 6.31.1; Thuc. 1.5.1-3).⁴¹ Samos' sudden inclusion in Asia may reflect a judgement on the character and hegemony of Polycrates. His alliance with Cambyses in wars against both Egypt and Sparta connects Samos with the Persian Empire in Asia. Furthermore, his desire to extend the reach of his tyranny connects him and Samos with the Persians' history of expansion from their Iranian homeland, throughout Asia and beyond. Polycrates emerges as an especially frightful tyrant, since he means to subjugate other Greeks outside of Samos, making himself master of the sea, Ionia and the islands (Hdt. 3.122.2).⁴² In the end, he does not live to fulfil these plans, murdered by Oroetes, satrap of Sardis (Hdt. 3.125.3). Cambyses too dies without securing any more territory for the Persian Empire. The theme of empire building and its hazards persists in book three, with the new king Darius announcing his plans to yoke together Europe and Asia and attack the Scythians (Hdt. 3.134.4). His wife persuades him also to direct his resources toward conquest of the Greek mainland in Europe. He, therefore, orders a reconnaissance of the whole region; Herodotus refers to those embarking on the mission as the first Persians who ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίας εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἀπίκοντο ("came from Asia to *Hellas*" – Hdt. 3.138.3). The phrasing recalls Herodotus' earlier reference to the Spartans' invasion of Samos as their "first expedition to Asia." With Darius now setting the Persians' sights on expanded dominion over the Greeks, Polycrates' comparable imperialist ambitions seem, in retrospect, akin to that of a barbarian, Asiatic monarch.

The practice and principles of autocratic government receive thorough consideration throughout book three. One of the most famous scenes is the so-called "Persian Debate." After Cambyses' death, a Magian imposter seizes the Persian throne, provoking a group of seven eminent Persians to revolt. The conspirators successfully assassinate the imposter and look to restore Persian authority over Asia (Hdt. 3.67.1 – 3.80.1). They then hold counsel about the future governance of the empire. Herodotus prefaces the debate by claiming that the words spoken during it seem unlikely to some Greeks; yet, he is in no doubt about their veracity (Hdt. 3.80.1). The first speaker

⁴¹ For discussion, see Seager and Tuplin (1980) 147-148; Malkin (2011) 48.

⁴² Dewald (2003) 39-40 summates that Polycrates' tyranny accords with the framework of Asiatic despotism established in the *Histories*. Asiatic despotism generates and sustains local tyrannies that have their own idiosyncrasies, but collectively pose a threat to free Greek communities; see also Georges (1994) 42, 181.

Otanes delivers the most unanticipated dialogue. He suggests eliminating the Persian monarchy because it breeds *hubris* and jealousy in a ruler, inciting him to commit various evil deeds. He names Cambyses as a paradigm of monarchy's pitfalls. Otanes advocates increasing the power of the common people, with political offices assigned by lot, civic participation in general assemblies, and equality before the law (Hdt. 3.80.2-6). The second speaker Megabyzus proposes to replace the monarchy with an oligarchy of the best men. Monarchy breeds *hubris*, but so too does democracy, as the common people have limited knowledge about what is best for Persia (Hdt. 3.81.1-3). The final speaker, Darius, prefers to maintain the monarchy, arguing that the rule of the one best man surpasses all other forms of governance. The best man can preside over his subjects with perfect wisdom, whereas oligarchy and democracy lead to factionalism and civil strife (Hdt. 3.82.1-5). Diverging from the elitist political ideology found on Achaemenid royal inscriptions, Otanes' ideas seem more consistent with the democratic atmosphere in Athens and the broad-based forms of constitutional government beginning to replace tyrannies all over *Hellas* during Herodotus' lifetime.⁴³ Nonetheless, because Herodotus treats the debate as authentic, the contributions of Otanes and Megabyzus suggest to the reader that it is too simplistic to view the Persians as innately despotic, even though a majority of the seven conspirators side with Darius and vote to preserve the Persian monarchy (Hdt. 3.83.1).⁴⁴ When Darius ascends to the Persian throne as the new monarch, Asia is confirmed as his inheritance bequeathed by the conquests of Cyrus and Cambyses. Only Arabia retains independence, its people living as allies rather than as slaves of the Persians (Hdt. 3.88.1). Darius divides his empire into twenty satrapies, each of which defer its administration to a local satrap and pay an annual tribute to the king (Hdt. 3.89.1-2). Herodotus extensively catalogues the tribute paid by each satrapy, noting that the revenue comes in from throughout Asia, parts of Libya, some islands, and also parts of Europe as far as Thessaly (Hdt. 3.96.1). The tentacles of Persian despotism reach beyond the confines of Asia, threatening to ensnare more Greek communities besides those in Asia Minor.

Persian despotism first enters into the European continent in book four of the *Histories*. Darius resolves to target Scythia prior to launching an invasion of mainland

⁴³ See Munson (2005) 4.

⁴⁴ Momigliano (1975) 129-130 contends that Herodotus is less concerned with an opposition between free Greeks and despotic barbarians than he is with the transgression of divine laws by people in positions of power, whether it be a Persian like Cambyses, or a Greek like Polycrates; see also Isaac (2004) 268-273; Kim (2009) 74-78; Gruen (2011b) 21-25.

Greece. He interprets Asia as the font of Persian military strength, abundant in men and revenue (Hdt. 4.1.1). The idea that waging war across continental divides amounts to ὀδίκημα becomes important again, with Darius setting out to punish Europe's Scythians for their ancient subjugation of the Median Empire in Asia (Hdt. 4.1.1-2, 4.4.1). The Persian retaliation will logically also result in ὀδίκημα, another attempt to extend the empire's reach beyond Asia. By this stage in the narrative, however, the frequent recurrence of intercontinental transgressions has descended into monotony, creating a subtext that nullifies the impression of ὀδίκημα and counteracts the validity of the continental divides. The Scythians' largely nomadic lifestyle adds another layer to this subtext, as their constant migrations are not limited by continental boundary lines (Hdt. 4.11.1-4, 4.19.1). Before properly examining Darius' campaign against the Scythians, Herodotus carries out an excursus on Scythia's ethnography and geography. He outlines the geographical location of each different Scythian tribe, and of several neighbouring peoples to the north and east. His discussion of the legendary Hyperboreans, who live north of Scythia, leads into an analysis of world geography. This analysis sets out an alternative worldview diverging from the customary Greek compartmentalisation of the *oikoumene* into continents. Herodotus laughs at early Greek mapmakers, who depict a bipartite continental system showing Asia and Europe equal in size and entirely surrounded by an outer ocean (Hdt. 4.36.2). He outlines his own mental map, orientated around a vertical axis of four peoples as opposed to a continental structure. Bordering the Erythraean Sea in the south, are the Persians; north of them are the Medians; next are the Saspis; and farthest north are the Colchians, bordering on the Euxine (Hdt. 4.37.1). Westward of these four peoples lie two promontories (ἄκται) that stretch out toward the Mediterranean Sea. The northern promontory, home to thirty separate peoples, extends out from Colchis and comprises the Anatolian Peninsula. (Hdt. 4.38.1-2). The second promontory extends out from Persia, and includes Assyria, Arabia, Palestine, Egypt and what is otherwise known as the Libyan continent (Hdt. 4.39.1-2, 4.41.1). East of the vertical axis, between the Caspian Sea and the Erythraean Sea, the land is inhabited as far as India (Hdt. 4.40.1-2).⁴⁵ Due to convention and for the sake of clarity, Herodotus still reverts to using the names of the continents throughout

⁴⁵ Myres (1896) 605-629 has argued that Herodotus' view of the *oikoumene* as orientated around the vertical axis of four peoples is Persian-centric and based on a Persian map of the world; Kaplan (1999) 225-228 suggests that the idea of promontories (like the idea of continents) does not accord with Persian ideology, and instead reflects Herodotus' own western Anatolian perspective; see also Prontera (1998) 77-83; Engels (1999) 122; Alonso-Núñez (2003) 147; Prontera (2007) 177-179; (2011) 179-195.

the *Histories* (Hdt. 4.45.5). Europe lies north of the vertical axis and, he notes, extends from east to west as far as Asia and Libya combined. It is larger than both in terms of breadth, not proportionate with Asia as other Greeks have suggested (Hdt. 4.42.1, 4.45.1). While Asia and Libya are enclosed by water, the same cannot be said with any certainty about Europe, as its northern and eastern regions are very much *terra incognita* (Hdt. 4.45.1). Herodotus asserts that the main problem with the continental system is that the three continents are joined to one another, their boundary lines arbitrarily dividing up what is technically one single landmass (Hdt. 4.45.2).⁴⁶ He also mentions the Greek folklore tradition in which the continental name Εὐρώπη derives from the Tyrian woman of the same name, a victim of intercontinental transgression who was unwillingly transported from her home in Asia to Europe (Hdt. 4.45.3-5). Herodotus' mention of this irony is another way in which he throws the continental framework into disarray.

Herodotus' account of Scythia has an inbuilt symmetry with his earlier account of Egypt; both combine analyses problematising the continental boundaries with ethnographic and historical discussions problematising the perceived boundaries between Greeks and barbarians. As he does with the Egyptians, Herodotus describes an array of distinctively Scythian *nomoi*, many of which are completely alien to the Greeks, such as the scalping of opponents defeated on the battlefield (Hdt. 4.64.1-4). Like the Egyptians, the Scythians are loath to practice foreign *nomoi*, especially those of the Greeks (Hdt. 4.76.1).⁴⁷ Their antipathy toward Greek way of life is illustrated by the stories of Anacharsis and Scyles, both of whom receive the punishment of death for engaging in Greek religious rites (Hdt. 4.76.1 – 4.80.5). Offsetting the Greek-Scythian divide, Herodotus also specifies certain aspects of history and culture that connect the two peoples.⁴⁸ He relates a tale told by the Pontic Greeks that Heracles fathered a son,

⁴⁶ For comment on this geographical section of the work, see esp. Munson (2001) 84-86.

⁴⁷ Redfield (2002) 35 perceives there to be an important opposition in Herodotus' cultural geography between Scythia and Egypt. For instance, Egypt's river Nile and alluvial floodplain make it an incredibly fertile land, a cradle of settled agricultural society. In contrast, Scythia's sparse steppe lands mean that many of its tribes live as nomadic hunter gatherers; see also Thomas (2000) 69. When, however, Egypt and Scythia are each juxtaposed with *Hellas*, they function as analogues of one another, similarly different in some ways from *Hellas* and similarly parallel to *Hellas* in other ways; cf. Hippoc. *Aer.* 19.1-7.

⁴⁸ This offsetting is consistent with Herodotus' depiction of the Greek-Egyptian divide in book two. Skinner (2012) 250 comments on Herodotus' presentation of the complex exchange of *nomoi* occurring throughout the *oikoumene*, and between the Greeks and Scythians specifically: "Prehistoric populations defy easy categorization, and societies are capable of evolving, adopting different forms of government, no longer carrying arms, or, in some cases, 'going native.' Although some exchanges of *nomoi* are frowned upon, for example Scyles' wish to carry out the Bacchic rites, others occur without mishap. Exceptions and inconsistencies abound."

Scythes, who became the progenitor of the whole line of Scythian kings (Hdt. 4.10.3). He also alludes to the significant cultural interface that occurs between the Scythians and the Greeks living throughout the Pontic region, at a juncture between the two peoples. A hybrid Scythian Greek tribe called the Callippidae dwell just north of Pontic Olbia, sowing various crops in the Greek way, rather than embracing Scythian nomadism (Hdt. 4.17.1). The same applies to the Geloni tribe, who migrated from Greek trading ports on the Euxine to settle among the Scythian Budini. The Geloni till the soil like the Callippidae; speak a language that is a mixture of Greek and Scythian; have temples constructed in honour of the Greek gods; and honour Dionysus with festivals and revelries (Hdt. 4.108.1 – 4.109.2).

In the same manner as Cyrus and Cambyses, Darius ignores a warning from his brother Artabanus to avoid war with the Scythians, due to how difficult they will be to overcome (Hdt. 4.83.1-2). Herodotus earlier observes the military advantages of Scythian nomadism. The Scythians are near invincible because their superior and total mobility enables them to evade their attackers whenever they suppose battle to be disadvantageous to them. Furthermore, when battle is advantageous to them, the Scythians' mobility prevents their attackers from escaping (Hdt. 4.46.2-3).⁴⁹ Unperturbed by his brother's concerns, Darius imitates the imperialist ὀδίκημα of his predecessors by bridging the Bosphorus and crossing from Asia into Europe, primed for war (Hdt. 4.83.1, 4.89.1).⁵⁰ Herodotus once more emphasises that the Ionian and Aeolian Greeks in Asia are subordinates of the Persian king. They are the leaders of Darius' fleet in the Euxine, supporting his land forces as they cross to Europe (Hdt. 4.89.1-2). On either side of the Europe-Asia divide, Darius erects pillars which communicate the breadth of his power and his intent to extend it farther. On the Asian side of the Bosphorus, two pillars, one inscribed in Assyrian and the other in Greek, enumerate the subject peoples of the Persian Empire fighting in Darius' army (Hdt. 4.87.1). On the banks of the river Tearus in Thrace, another pillar is inscribed that refers to Darius' campaign against the Scythians, describing him as Περσέων τε καὶ πάσης τῆς ἡπείρου βασιλεύς ("King of the Persians and the whole continent [Asia]" – Hdt. 4.91.1-2). Herodotus puts a corresponding sentiment in the mouths of the Scythians.

⁴⁹ Thuc. 2.97.6 highlights the potential of Scythian formidability, asserting that the Scythians are the most populous people in Europe, who, if united, could not be overpowered by any people in Asia.

⁵⁰ Hartog (1988) 10-11, 35-36 argues that Herodotus' account of the Scythians partly functions as a veiled commentary on Athenian Greek identity. The Scythians are quasi-Athenians in that their victory over

Messengers tell an assembly of Scythian kings that all those on the other continent (οἱ τὰ ἐν τῇ ἡπείρῳ τῇ ἑτέρῃ πάντα) are subject to Darius, and that he had now crossed over to this continent (τήνδε τὴν ἡπειρον), from Asia to Europe (Hdt. 4.118.1). He had subjugated the Thracians, and then bridged the river Ister (Danube) on his march toward Scythia (Hdt. 4.118.1). At the Ister, Darius orders the Ionian contingents in his invasion force to guard the bridge until he returns, or until sixty days have passed (Hdt. 4.98.1-3). The Scythians, after forcing the Persians to retreat, implore the Ionians to destroy the bridge, thereby dooming the Persians and regaining their own freedom from barbarian despotism (Hdt. 4.136.3-4). The Ionian tyrants vote to maintain their allegiance to the Great King, claiming that it is because of Darius that they are able to rule in each of their *poleis*. If given the opportunity, the *poleis* would depose them as tyrants and establish democratic governments (Hdt. 4.137.1-3). The Ionians pretend to do the Scythians' bidding, but in the end they help Darius and his army withdraw safely across the Ister and travel back to Asia via the Hellespont (Hdt. 4.141.1, 4.143.1, 5.11.1).

Herodotus reports a taunt that the Scythians directed at the Ionians in reaction to their duplicity. The Scythians judge that the Ionians, when free, are the worst cowards of all men in the world, and when they are slaves, none love their masters more or have less desire to escape than they do (Hdt. 4.142.1). This judgement adds to the work's generally unsympathetic appraisal of Ionian identity in Asia, marred as it is by Ionia's assimilation into the Achaemenid Persian Empire. The taunt is unusual in that it represents a non-Greek criticism of the Ionians' cultural character. The non-Greek Scythians paradoxically barbarise the Ionian Greeks, tapping into the mood of dissatisfaction with Ionia observable in many fifth-century Athenian sources disturbed by the region's chequered history of cooperation with the Persians. The Scythians, in contrast to the Ionians, succeed in repelling the Persian threat. They follow the lead of both the Massagetae and Ethiopians before them, and set a precedent for the allied Greeks who would first meet the Persian army in battle at Marathon. The Scythians' criticism of the Ionians implicates the continents – the Ionians in Asia have failed where others outside of Asia have triumphed in the struggle against Persian expansionism. The language used by the Scythians, referring to the Ionians' cowardly and slavish disposition, mirrors the delineation of Asiatic peoples in *Airs, Waters, Places*.⁵¹ The

Darius presages the Athenians' victory over Xerxes; to both peoples, the Persians are enemies and barbarians; see also Munson (2001) 107, 118, 123.

⁵¹ See Georges (1994) 205.

treatise argues that the temperate, uniform climate in Asia engenders a lack of spirit among most of its inhabitants, including the Ionians. In combination with *nomoi*, environmental determinism is an explanatory factor in the continent's submission to Persian despotism (Hippoc. *Aer.* 12.10-45, 16.3-43, 23.1-41). In Europe, the climate is comparatively harsh and volatile, conditioning its inhabitants, including both the Scythians and Greeks of the mainland, to possess greater courage, spiritedness and belligerence. These traits assist in securing the peoples' freedom from foreign rule (Hippoc. *Aer.* 13.10-24, 16.3-43, 23.1-41).⁵² Herodotus associates Ionia with the most temperate, idyllic climate in the *oikoumene* (Hdt. 1.142.1-2); however, he elsewhere says the same about the whole of *Hellas* (Hdt. 3.106.1). In his view then, the slavishness of the Ionians in Asia must relate more to *nomoi* than environmental determinism.

The narrative of the *Histories* has thus far constructed a Europe-Asia divide that is opaque in terms of both geography and culture. On several occasions in the first four books, Herodotus questions the divide's geographical validity. Its relevance to cultural history is also challenged by the incessant sequence of intercontinental transgressions undertaken by various peoples in migrations and acts of war. The concept of a conceptual synonymy between Europe and Asia, Greek and barbarian, East and West is at variance with Herodotus' nuanced appreciation of the different cultures comprising the *oikoumene* and their fundamental interconnectedness. The Europe-Asia divide is, though, integrated into the conversation about Ionia's ambiguous ethno-cultural and geopolitical status within the Greek world.⁵³

Ethno-cultural Identity at Geographical Crossroads in Herodotus' Narration of the Persian Invasion: Books 5-9

In book five of the *Histories*, as Herodotus transitions into his historical narrative of the Persian invasion, the Ionians in Asia fail once more to throw off the Persian yoke. The account of the Ionian Revolt reworks the perceived ethno-cultural and political disparities between enslaved Ionians in Asia and free Greeks of the mainland in Europe. Book five opens with a short explanation of the Persian operations in Europe, following

⁵² Thomas (2000) 90-97 states that the continental determinism in *Airs, Waters, Places* explains why all of Asia fell to the Persians, but most of the peoples in Europe managed to mount successful resistances; for further discussion, see Thomas (2006) 69-70; Romm (2010) 221-223; Wrenhaven (2012) 20, 48.

⁵³ Munson (2005) 14 explains that Herodotus detracts from the differentiation of Greek and barbarian by emphasising the Greeks' lack of uniformity on different levels – the genealogical, linguistic, and cultural.

the failure in Scythia. As Darius returns to Asia, he leaves an army in Europe whose objective is to subdue peoples along the seacoast of Thrace, the Hellespontine region and Macedonia. Led by Megabyzus, the Persian army attempts to convert various settlements into Persian satellites. The reactions of the Macedonians, as well as the Perinthians and Paeonians in Thrace, receive special mention (Hdt. 5.1.1 – 5.2.2, 5.17.1). The Macedonian king Amyntas is receptive to the Persians' demand for earth and water as tokens of submission, allowing his realm to become a client of the Persian Empire (Hdt. 5.17.1 – 5.21.2). From Herodotus' standpoint, the Macedonians have a disputed ethno-cultural status. He is unclear about the extent to which the Macedonian people as a whole should be considered ethnically and culturally Greek; however, he notes that their royal line is believed to be of Argive descent, and authorised to compete in the Olympic Games reserved for Greek competitors only (Hdt. 5.22.1-2, 9.45.2).⁵⁴ Prior to entering Macedonia, the Persians easily subjugate the Paeonians of Thrace and the Perinthians of the Propontis. Darius orders the defeated Paeonians to be uprooted from their homes and transported in slavery across the continental divide from Europe to Asia (Hdt. 5.12.1, 5.15.3, 5.17.1). Herodotus states that the Perinthians fought bravely to defend their freedom from Persian despotism, but were overwhelmed by the enemy's weight of numbers (Hdt. 5.2.2). This reference to the Perinthians' bravery in defeat recalls how Herodotus describes the Ionian resistance to the Persian conquest of Ionia during the reign of Cyrus the Great (Hdt. 1.169.1). Although settled in European Thrace, the Perinthians originated as colonists from Samos and are, therefore, of Ionian heritage. They share with the Ionians in Asia a similar experience of Persian despotism. Their capitulation to the Persians means that the political component of their *polis* identity diverges from that of other Greeks of the mainland, who join together later in the *Histories* to ward off the Persians and successfully preserve their freedom. By subjugating Macedonia and the Thracian seacoast, the autocratic rule of the Persian king spills over the Europe-Asia divide and oppresses more Greeks than just those living in Asia.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ For discussion of the Macedonians' disputed ethno-cultural status, see Coleman (1997) 177; J. M. Hall (2001) 159-186; Malkin (2001) 7-8; Worthington (2003) 70; Skinner (2012) 250.

⁵⁵ Hdt. 5.3.1 states that the Thracians are the most populous people in the world after the Indians, and that if they united together they would be a formidable power. He deems such unity to be impossible, however; as a result, the Thracians are weak militarily. This depiction of the Thracians' current military weakness is similar to Thucydides' depiction of the neighbouring Scythians (Thuc. 2.97.6), but differs from Herodotus' own account of Scythian military strength (Hdt. 4.46.2-3). Herodotus' perception of Thracian military weakness is informed by the fact that Thrace was a major source of slaves in fifth-century Athens: see Cartledge (1993) 53; Tsiafakis (2000) 364-366; Skinner (2012) 83-86.

Herodotus next begins his account of the Ionian Revolt. In the lead-up, Aristagoras, deputy tyrant of Miletus, is in favour with the Persians. He is shown advising the local satrap Artaphrenes to wage war against Naxos, Paros, Andros and other Cycladic Islands. Conquest of the Cyclades, he asserts, could serve as a launchpad for a Persian invasion of Euboea (Hdt. 5.31.1-4). Herodotus provides no explicit condemnation of Aristagoras. His association with Persian imperialism and the potential subdual of other Greeks is, nonetheless, reminiscent of the Ionian tyrant Polycrates, who makes a fairly disagreeable impression in book three. The Persians struggle to carry out the operation against Naxos, and Aristagoras, unable to provide decisive assistance, fears that Artaphrenes may turn on him and confiscate his tyranny over Miletus (Hdt. 5.35.1). Taking pre-emptive action, he incites Miletus and the rest of Ionia to revolt from the Great King (Hdt. 5.35.1 – 5.37.1). Herodotus states that in an effort to make the Ionians receptive to the idea of revolt, Aristagoras deceitfully proposes to give up his tyranny and institute equal political rights in Miletus and throughout all Ionia (Hdt. 5.37.2). Despite Aristagoras' pretence, tyranny again emerges as an undesirable form of governance, which has at different times been experienced by many Greek communities, from Athens to Ionia. Herodotus portrays even the Ionians of Asia, slaves to Persian monarchy and the Persian-backed local tyrannies, as ultimately preferring a form of popular government. As the narrative progresses, it becomes apparent that the Ionians are destined to remain subjects of the Great King, at least in the short-term. When Aristagoras travels to King Cleomenes of Sparta to seek military support for the revolt, he declares it a great shame that the Ionians are slaves and not free men (Hdt. 5.49.2). The map which Aristagoras displays to Cleomenes situates the Ionians within Asia and alongside other peoples who are slaves to the power of the Persians (Hdt. 5.49.4-9).⁵⁶ Herodotus follows up the map scene with a description of the Royal Road from Sardis to Susa, which demonstrates further the Persian Empire's visible administrative and political dominance on the continent where the Ionians live (Hdt. 5.52.1 – 5.53.1).⁵⁷ While the Ionians at the time of the revolt are enduring foreign despotism and local tyrannies, the Athenians in mainland Greece have recently rid themselves of the tyrant Pisistratids (510 BC) and established a democracy (Hdt.

⁵⁶ Branscome (2013) 107 asserts that Aristagoras' map acts as an illustration of Herodotus' forthcoming description of the Royal Road.

⁵⁷ For discussion of the Persian Empire as it is represented in the Royal Road description, see esp. Kaplan (1999) 250; Thomas (2000) 90, 102.

5.65.5). It is the free, democratic Athenians to whom Aristagoras turns after Cleomenes refuses to help (Hdt. 5.55.1, 5.97.1).

Herodotus states that Athens, although it had been a great *polis* before, became even greater once liberated from its tyrants (Hdt. 5.66.1). Like Aeschylus before him, he deems democratic equality to be beneficial from a military standpoint. While living under tyranny, the Athenians were no better than their neighbours in war, but under a democracy they became by far the best of all (Hdt. 5.78.1).⁵⁸ Aristagoras appeals to Athenian military prowess, proclaiming that the Persians fight with neither spear nor shield and can be easily overpowered (Hdt. 5.97.1).⁵⁹ He also points out that the Milesians themselves are settlers from Athens, and so it is only right that the Athenians come to their rescue (Hdt. 5.97.2). It is here that Herodotus begins to look at the Athenians from a different angle than previously, associating them cynically with the Ionian Revolt. In the process, he begins to soften the conceptual fissure already constructed between the free Athenians in Europe and the enslaved Ionians in Asia. The change in the dress of Athenian women from the traditional Dorian style to the Ionian style of Carian origin is, for instance, mentioned (Hdt. 5.87.3 – 5.88.2). Herodotus presents Aristagoras as disingenuous in his approach to the Athenians. Their assent to his request for aid suggests that it is easier to deceive many than it is one, with Aristagoras able to persuade the Athenian democratic voting assembly, whereas he could not persuade the Spartan king Cleomenes. Democracy's mob mentality is a weakness that results in the Athenians sending twenty ships in support of the Ionians. Athens' involvement in a revolt that Herodotus treats with a healthy dose of pessimism prompts this remark (Hdt. 5.97.3):

αὗται δὲ αἱ νέες ἀρχὴ κακῶν ἐγένοντο Ἑλλησί τε καὶ βαρβάροισι.

These ships were the beginning of evils for both Greeks and barbarians.

The Athenian ships are the proximate cause of Persian hostility toward mainland Greece. They continue the motif of intercontinental transgressions, crossing from

⁵⁸ Cf. Hdt. 5.91.1-2, where the Spartans realise that if the Athenians remain free, then they will be their equals; but if the Athenians are subjected to tyranny, then they will become weak and subservient.

⁵⁹ Branscome (2013) 115-119 notes that Aristagoras' emphasis on the military ineffectiveness of the Persians contrasts with other parts of the *Histories* (and Aeschylus' *Persians*) where the Persians are admirable opponents.

Europe to Asia and providing the Ionians with enough security and firepower to sack Lydian Sardis (Hdt. 5.100.1 – 5.101.3).⁶⁰ The recent history and imminent future of Persian militarism crossing continental divides is interrupted by an Athenian foray across the water. By the end of book five, Aristagoras has fled Miletus and the Persians have wrested back the upper hand from the Ionians and their Athenian allies. Herodotus now starts to hesitate about the Athenians' position at the pinnacle of Greek culture, self-proclaimed in their contemporary literary and artistic propaganda. The ill-fated Athenian incursion into Asia Minor confirms that Athens and Achaemenid Persia are on a collision path to all-out war. It also augurs the final chapters of the *Histories* where the Athenian counteroffensive at the conclusion of the Persian invasion resembles a Persian imperialist agenda, its sights set upon the peoples of another continent.⁶¹

The Ionian Revolt reaches a catastrophic climax in book six of the *Histories*. Toward the beginning of the book, the Chian islanders ask Miletus' expatriate tyrant Histiaeus why he so vehemently induced Aristagoras to revolt and inflict such great evil upon the Ionians in Asia (Hdt. 6.3.1). According to Herodotus, when Histiaeus returns to Miletus from Persia, the Milesians expel him from the city because, having tasted some degree of political autonomy after Aristagoras' flight, they are now unwilling to submit to another tyrant (Hdt. 6.5.1). The personal interests of both Histiaeus and Aristagoras, tyrant and deputy tyrant, had contributed greatly to the Ionians' plight. Their plight is exacerbated at the Battle of Lade (494 BC), where the Persians attain a decisive victory over the Ionian fleet that all but puts an end to the revolt. At Lade, the Ionian tyrants earlier deposed by Aristagoras ally with the Persians and send messages to their countrymen, which implore them to surrender to the Persians in return for favourable treatment. The people of Ionia refuse this treachery, solidifying Herodotus' dissatisfaction with Greek tyrants, especially those with allegiances to the Achaemenid Persian Empire (Hdt. 6.9.2 – 6.10.1). Despite their creditable refusal to surrender, the Ionians fighting at Lade still inevitably conform to the stereotype of slavish Ionian character. The Phocaean general Dionysius announces that the main outcome of Lade

⁶⁰ Lateiner (1985) 91 understands the involvement of Athenian ships in the Ionian Revolt as another act in the series of moral transgressions across continental boundary lines committed by both Greeks and Persians.

⁶¹ See Georges (1994) 129-132, 141-142. Alty (1982) 1-14 contends that as a Dorian Greek from Halicarnassus, Herodotus is biased against the Ionians of Asia, but does not extend this bias to the Athenians. It is my summation that from the Ionian Revolt onwards, Herodotus' depiction of the Athenians is highly variable. Athens' leadership against the Persian threat makes it a guardian of Greek freedom, but also a domineering power capable of putting its own interests ahead of panhellenic interests whenever the two are not necessarily compatible.

will be either freedom or prolonged slavery for the Ionians in Asia. If they, remaining as slack and disorderly as ever, are defeated, then they can expect the Persians to punish them for rebelling (Hdt. 6.11.2). The slavishness of the Ionians in Asia is exposed in the context of battle, as the soldiers and sailors recoil from the hard work and training which Dionysius demands of them prior to engaging the Persians. They believe that it is better to tolerate the impending slavery than the present toil. Some Samian generals witness all this disorder and decide to abandon the alliance (Hdt. 6.12.1 – 6.13.2). During the naval battle, many of the Ionian peoples show a lack of fortitude, fleeing without offering any meaningful resistance. Herodotus is unable to name exactly which contingents deserted, aside from the Samians and the Lesbians, because they all subsequently blamed one another (Hdt. 6.14.1-3). Of the Ionians who stood their ground, the Chians, in particular, are said to have accomplished deeds of great renown (Hdt. 6.15.1). After Lade, the Persians lay siege to Miletus, murdering most of its men and enslaving its women and children (Hdt. 6.18.1 – 6.19.3). These captives are brought to Susa and resettled in a *polis* on the Persian Gulf (Hdt. 6.20.1). The awful fate of Miletus strikes a chord in Athens. Herodotus highlights the Athenians' distress at the performance of Phrynichus' *Sack of Miletus* in c. 493 BC (Hdt. 6.21.2), perhaps pointing to some feeling of guilt for their support of the revolt, which resulted in the enslavement of all Ionia by a foreign power for a third time (Hdt. 6.32.1).

After the Ionian Revolt, the Persians plan to send an invasion force across to the Greek mainland in retaliation against Athens for its support of the Ionians. The Persian general Mardonius, as he prepares to cross over to Europe with an army, deposes the tyrants in each Ionian *polis* and replaces them with democracies (Hdt. 6.43.3-4).⁶² Herodotus refers back to the dialogue of Otanes in book three, which emulates Athenian democratic ideals and serves to reiterate that the Persians are not always predictably despotic and barbarian. The timing is significant because it precedes Mardonius' campaign aimed at subjugating Athens, its ally Eretria (a *polis* on Euboea), and as many Greek *poleis* in Europe as possible (Hdt. 6.44.1). Proof of Herodotus' readiness to establish and problematise boundaries simultaneously, the Persians are at their most un-barbarian immediately before their assault against the Greeks in Europe casts them as wicked barbarian antagonists. Mardonius' campaign ends quickly, achieving only limited success in Thrace and Macedonia. In the next year though (491 BC), King

⁶² For discussion, see Georges (1994) 42, 181.

Darius send heralds to the Aegean islands and to the Greek mainland to demand earth and water. The Athenians consider those who comply and give up their freedom, like their enemies the Aeginetans, to be προδόντες τὴν Ἑλλάδα (“traitors to *Hellas*” – Hdt. 6.49.3). In their dealings with the Aeginetans, the Athenians seek Sparta’s backing. Herodotus’ presentation of the Spartans is again conflicted – they appear almost as barbarian as they do Greek. He knows that the Spartans, on the one hand, will courageously lead the Greeks, along with the Athenians, to victory over the Persians; on the other hand, they are responsible, along with the Athenians, for the instability and internecine conflict currently gripping *Hellas* during the early years of the Peloponnesian War.⁶³ The unusual Spartan diarchy leads to indecision about how to handle Aegina. The two kings, Cleomenes and Demaratus, end up in a vicious feud over the issue, which results in Demaratus abdicating and fleeing to Asia where he is received into the court of the Great King (Hdt. 6.70.1-3). Herodotus takes this opportunity to detail the Spartans’ barbarian ancestry. As Dorians, the Spartans are descended from the hero Perseus, whom the Greeks believe to be of Egyptian lineage and whom the Persians believe to be of Assyrian lineage (Hdt. 6.53.1 – 6.54.1). Herodotus also observes that the Spartans deviate from Greek norms in their royal funerary practices, burying and mourning their kings in the same way as many barbarian peoples of Asia (Hdt. 6.58.1-6).⁶⁴

In the second half of book six, the Battle of Marathon takes centre stage. The Spartans move into the background, since Marathon was one of the major battles that the Athenians fought against the Persian invaders without Spartan assistance. At this moment in history, *Hellas* is dislocated in principle and action. The Spartans do not join the Athenians at Marathon because they are obliged by state law to celebrate the Carneia, an exclusively Spartan festival held in honour of Apollo (Hdt. 6.106.1-3). Also, during a digression about a Milesian man’s visit to Sparta some generations earlier, Herodotus describes Ionia as if it is a separate world from the rest of *Hellas* (Hdt. 6.86.4). This conceptual separation probably stems from the Ionians’ recurrent involvement in Persian military campaigns. Herodotus goes on to emphasise that the Ionians and Aeolians in Asia are once again fighting on the side of the Persians, helping

⁶³ Hartog (1988) 152; Georges (1994) 206; Pelling (1997b) 54; Munson (2005) 18; Rood (2006) 303.

⁶⁴ Cf. Hdt. 7.3.1-4 where King Darius follows Demaratus’ advice in choosing Xerxes as his successor, equivalent with the Spartans’ own succession custom. For discussion of how Herodotus associates Sparta’s kings with the Achaemenid monarchy, see Hartog (1988) 152; Coleman (1997) 197; Pelling (1997b) 54; Munson (2005) 18; Rood (2006) 303.

them to defeat the Eretrians in a conflict prior to Marathon (Hdt. 6.98.1). Without a united Greek front assembled to meet the Persians at Marathon, a sense of collective Greek identity is absent from Herodotus' account of the battle. Instead, it is the Athenians who set themselves apart from most other Greeks, resisting the Persian advance with only the Plataeans offering support (Hdt. 6.111.1-3). One Athenian general, Miltiades, asserts that a victory at Marathon will ensure that Athens remains free and becomes the foremost *polis* in all of *Hellas* (Hdt. 6.109.3-6). Both Aloni and Boedeker argue that Herodotus' narrative is permeated by a picture of sour relations between Greek *poleis* at the time of the Persian invasion. The formative stages of the Peloponnesian War impact his view of intra-Greek relations. Imprinted in his mind is the fate of places like Plataea, the *polis* which came to the aid of Athens at Marathon, and was later laid to waste by the Thebans in the opening year of the Peloponnesian War (431 BC) and by the Spartans from 429 to 427 BC.⁶⁵ When recounting the Battle of Marathon, Herodotus emphasises the great valour displayed. The Athenians triumph over a numerically superior enemy, fighting in a memorable fashion. They charge the Persian line at a run and are the first Greeks ever to meet the Persians in battle devoid of any fear (Hdt. 6.112.1-3). Symptomatic of Herodotus' equivocal delineation of boundaries, he presents the Athenians as the most heroic of Greek peoples only a short while after their involvement in the Ionian Revolt begins a sequence of evils for both Greeks and barbarians (Hdt. 5.97.3). The Persian retreat back across the water to Asia only temporarily completes Athens' triumph (Hdt. 6.116.1), an early episode in a war that brings plenty of hardship to Athens and the Greek mainland in Europe. When the Persians cross back over to Asia, for instance, they take with them as slaves Athens' allies the Eretrians, another intercontinental ἀδίκημα and warning sign of worse to come for the Greeks.

Book seven of the *Histories* details the Persians' renewed efforts to conquer the Greek mainland in the decade following the Battle of Marathon. The book culminates with the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC, where the Spartans become defenders of *Hellas*, like the Athenians were at Marathon. The Spartans fight to the death in a valiant attempt to prevent the Persians from entering northern mainland Greece via the narrow pass at Thermopylae. Earlier, when messages reach Darius about the torrid fate of his army at Marathon, he is greatly angered. He makes preparations for another invasion,

⁶⁵ Aloni (2001) 98-100; Boedeker (2001) 131-134.

which causes commotion in Asia for three years, as the best men are recruited into the army and mobilised for war (Hdt. 7.1.2). As in Aeschylus' *Persians*, the notion that Achaemenid Persia draws its countless soldiers from throughout the whole Asian continent is repeatedly mentioned, used to accentuate the vast size and apparent formidability of the army (Hdt. 7.9γ.1, 7.19.3, 7.21.1-2, 7.48.1, 7.58.2, 7.184.1-5).⁶⁶ After Darius' death, the Persian kingship is transferred to his son Xerxes, who recruits soldiers from outside of Asia even, with various peoples of Libya and Europe assisting the cause (Hdt. 7.71.1, 7.185.1-4). Xerxes' multitudes contrast with the far smaller, but brave and proficient allied Greek forces assembled at Thermopylae, of which the Spartans are the leaders (Hdt. 7.202.1 – 7.203.2). Herodotus provides an exhaustive catalogue of Xerxes' army and fleet that methodically runs through all the different peoples who contribute men and arms (Hdt. 7.60.1 – 7.99.3).⁶⁷ Among the contributors are the Ionians, Aeolians and Dorians of western Asia (Hdt. 7.93.1 – 7.95.1). Throughout the *Histories*, the Ionians and Aeolians have been established participants in Persian military ventures.⁶⁸ In the case of Thermopylae, Herodotus for the first time explicitly makes note of Dorian contingents fighting on the Persian side.⁶⁹ When cataloguing the assembled Persian forces, he demonstrates that the cultural divide between Greeks and barbarians is not universally gaping. He draws attention to the dress and arms of each different contingent. Some are attired in a very foreign manner, while others, such as the Lydians, Phoenicians and Cyprians, are clad almost indistinguishably from the Greeks (Hdt. 7.74.1, 7.89.1 – 7.90.1).

Xerxes' invasion across the continental divide pits all the different Greeks in Asia against their kinfolk on the Greek mainland in Europe (Hdt. 7.9α.1, 7.51.2). *Hellas*, therefore, remains geopolitically fragmented by the Europe-Asia divide.

⁶⁶ Lycurg. *Leoc.* 104 states that at Marathon the Athenians defeated "an army from the whole of Asia" (ἐξ ἀπάσης τῆς Ἀσίας στόλον).

⁶⁷ Armayor (1978) 7 argues that Herodotus' great catalogues of the Persian Empire, like this one of Xerxes' army, are not derived from Persian documentation. Their contents and structures are based on earlier Greek catalogues (e.g. Homer's "Catalogue of Ships"), and reflect a Greek interpretation of the Persian Empire.

⁶⁸ Xerxes identifies the Ionians in particular as Persian loyalists, trusting them wholeheartedly because, when given the opportunity to betray his father Darius at the behest of the Scythians, the Ionians chose to honour their agreement with the Great King instead (Hdt. 4.137.1-3, 7.52.1-2).

⁶⁹ Georges (1993) 130-143 believes that Herodotus engages with the propaganda of the Peloponnesian War, using the Pelasgian folktale, emphasis on Ionian slavishness and hints at Athens' imperialist destiny to barbarise the Athenians and their Ionian kin. He thereby elevates his own Dorian kin to a superior ethno-cultural status. My analysis suggests that Herodotus' stance on the Dorian-Ionian division may not be quite so black and white, as he mentions the inclusion in Xerxes' army of the Dorians in Asia. Moreover, he frequently raises issues of ethnic descent and culture that compromise the Greekness of the Dorian Spartans; see also Georges (1994) 168; Desmond (2004) 26, 33-34.

Mainland Greece, though, is only slightly more cohesive in resistance than it was at Marathon ten years earlier. The Spartans spearhead the Greek alliance at Thermopylae, while the Athenians do the same at the Battle of Artemisium that takes place simultaneously off the coast of nearby Euboea (Hdt. 8.15.1). There are, on the other hand, some Greeks of the mainland who play the part of dissenters and villains. The banished Pisistratids travel from Athens to Susa, urging Xerxes to bridge the Hellespont and march against the Greeks. The Aleuadae, the most powerful family of Thessaly, similarly welcome the Persian invasion (Hdt. 7.6.1-5). As Xerxes approaches the mainland, several Greek peoples surrender and side with the barbarian, including most of the Thessalian and Boeotian tribes, except the Thespians and Plataeans (Hdt. 7.108.1, 7.130.3, 7.132.1, 7.138.1-2). Herodotus is suspicious of those few Thebans who fight with the Spartans at Thermopylae, asserting that they do so against their own will, kept as hostages by King Leonidas because of their reputation as Persian sympathisers (Hdt. 7.202.1, 7.205.1-3, 7.222.1). As the Spartans are slaughtered in the narrow pass, these Thebans hand themselves over to Xerxes and profess their loyalty (Hdt. 7.233.1-2). The Greeks who choose to fight together against the Persians enter into an agreement whereby should they be victorious, they will dedicate to Apollo at Delphi the possessions of all those other Greeks who submitted to the Persians by their own free will (Hdt. 7.132.2).⁷⁰ The main military antagonist to the Achaemenid Persian Empire as it advances westward beyond the confines of Asia is not all *Hellas*, nor mainland Greece in its entirety, but specifically that portion of Greeks allied in resistance with the Athenians and Spartans. This pragmatic coalition, uniting Athens and Sparta, Ionians and Dorians in war against Persia would have had an awkward resonance for Herodotus and his contemporaries, an obvious deviation from the internecine struggle embroiling the mainland in their present day.⁷¹

At an assembly of Persian nobles prior to Thermopylae and Artemisium, Xerxes declares that if the Persians successfully dispatch Athens and its allies in battle, then there will be nobody in the *oikoumene* who will be a match for them in war. Triumph over Athens, and consequently over the Greek mainland, will establish the Persians in Europe, a continent over which they have so far been unable to gain a firm stranglehold.

⁷⁰ Herodotus highlights the political disunity within the Greek world, explaining how the Corcyraeans and the Syracusans both avoided joining the Greek alliance against Xerxes: see Hdt. 7.162.1-2, 7.168.1-4.

⁷¹ Thuc. 1.18.2 asserts that the eventual defeat of the Persians was the result of a common effort, but those who resisted against the Persians later split into two factions, one siding with Athens and the other with Sparta.

By marshalling the multitudes of Asia, Persia, Xerxes believes, will be able to absorb all *Hellas* and the whole of Europe, making the borders of the empire accord with those of the heavens (Hdt. 7.8γ.1-3, 7.50.4, 7.54.2, 7.138.1, 8.108.3).⁷² As signified by a vision that Xerxes has of himself crowned with an olive branch whose shoots have spread over the whole earth (Hdt. 7.19.1-3), the edges of the *oikoumene* are the only hypothetical limits to Persian expansion.⁷³ According to Xerxes' worldview, as the empire expands its borders, all lands will become one, united as tributaries to the Persian king (Hdt. 7.8γ.1 – 7.9γ.1). Therein lies a specific geopolitical justification for Herodotus' earlier assertions that the *oikoumene* is a single continuous landmass artificially and illogically partitioned by the Greek continental system (Hdt. 4.45.2). Since the Athenians had both conspired in the Ionian sack of Sardis and triumphed at Marathon, the Persians in the *Histories* view them as even more belligerent adversaries than the Massagetae, Ethiopians and Scythians who had earlier repelled the armies of Persian kings (Hdt. 7.18.2-4). Xerxes, as a result, sees the current war as one between two empire builders, which will decide whether Greek territory comes under Persian control or whether Persian territory comes under Greek control (Hdt. 7.10α.2 – 7.11.4). In his eyes, the Athenians and their allies in Europe are the barbarians, hostile antagonists from whom he demands comeuppance for the wrongs that they committed against his father and the peoples in Asia. Their wrongs date back as far as the Trojan War, one of the first conflicts known to have disrupted the Europe-Asia divide, and confuse the distinction between Greek and barbarian, as illustrated in the proem to the *Histories*.⁷⁴

Herodotus depicts Xerxes' bridging of the Hellespont and transportation of his army from Asia to Europe as the most momentous, but also ill-omened event in the history of intercontinental transgressions. The Persians shackle together the Europe-

⁷² This perception of the objective of Persian conquest corresponds with the ideology of world domination found on Achaemenid royal inscriptions: see e.g. Kuhrt (2007) 5-6, 135, 242, 469; Haubold (2012) 13; Rollinger (2013) 93-95; Harrison (2014) 13-14. De Romilly (1992) 3 argues that Xerxes would have had a basic knowledge of Europe west of mainland Greece, but that the mainland was the only part of the continent that really mattered to him in the context of his war of revenge. Hdt. 7.157.1-3 states that when visiting Syracuse in Sicily, Greek envoys attempt to persuade the tyrant Gelon to join their alliance. They assert that Xerxes, leading his army from the east out of Asia, will subdue Athens and then all Greek lands, thus placing even Syracuse in grave danger.

⁷³ In light of the Persians' own written records, Rhodes (2007) 32 notes that the continental dichotomy was not as important for them as the *Histories* make it seem, when it repeatedly depicts the Persian Empire as virtually synonymous with the Asian continent.

⁷⁴ See Haubold (2007) 47-63. Hdt. 7.20.1-2 compares the immense scale of Xerxes' campaign against mainland Greece with a sequence of historical intercontinental incursions, including Darius' invasion of Scythia; the Scythian pursuit of the Cimmerians into Asia; the Greek siege of Troy; and an even earlier foray across the Bosphorus and into Thrace by Mysian and Teucrian contingents; cf. also the stories of the Phrygians' and the Thracians' ancient migrations from Europe to Asia (Hdt. 7.73.1, 7.75.1-2).

Asia divide by building a bridge of boats across the Hellespont (Hdt. 7.33.1 – 7.34.1). The bridge symbolises the yoke of slavery that the Great King desires to extend across the water and impose upon Athens especially. As Herodotus recounts the bridge's construction, he foreshadows the dreadful fate for which the Persian invasion force is destined. It is not long after the Persian entry into Europe, he notes, that the Athenians emerge victorious and then appear on the European side of the Hellespont in a counteroffensive against the Persians. A crucial symbolic act of this counteroffensive is the crucifixion of Artaÿctes, the deposed Persian tyrant of the Greek *polis* Sestos. Crucifixion is Artaÿctes' punishment for seizing the treasure in the temple of Protesilaus at Elaeus and committing impious deeds therein. This is the same Protesilaus who had in ancient times been the first Greek to set foot upon the soil of Asia, and also the first Greek to die during the Trojan War (Hdt. 7.33.1). The Athenians' violent homage to the memory of Protesilaus, which Herodotus pre-empts now and describes in detail later, reminds the Persians of the Greek triumph at Troy, thereby auguring the Greek triumph in the current war. At the same time, it warns the Persians against any future invasions and signals the possibility of Athenian retaliatory aggression, of a new Trojan War which could see the Athenians transgress the Europe-Asia divide and imitate in reverse the barbarian imperialists whom they had fought so hard to repulse.⁷⁵ Herodotus reports that upon its completion, a great storm destroys Xerxes' bridge over the Hellespont, another ominous sign of the disaster awaiting the Persians. Compounding the sense of doom and reinforcing the *hubris* at the heart of Xerxes' ego, the Great King orders the Hellespont to be whipped and branded, and the bridge builders to be beheaded (Hdt. 7.35.1-3). The bridge is then hastily rebuilt and the army mustered to Abydos in preparation for the crossing (Hdt. 7.45.1). There, Xerxes offers dedications to the sea, possibly as atonement for his recent violence against it (Hdt. 7.54.1-3). After crossing over to Europe, a portent appears to the Persians of a mare giving birth to a hare. Herodotus interprets this as an unheeded caution to Xerxes that he would lead an army to the Greek mainland in great splendour (like a mare), but would return to the Hellespont fleeing for his life (like a hare) (Hdt. 7.57.2). Xerxes' eventual defeat is rendered as an inescapable consequence of his imperialist zeal to

⁷⁵ This passage, as well as another one at the conclusion of the *Histories*, which further explains the story of Artaÿctes' dismal fate at the hands of the Athenians, blur the boundary lines between the Athenians and the Persian barbarians in Asia, see esp. Lateiner (1985) 89-92; Boedeker (1988) 47-48; Lateiner (1989) 127-134; Georges (1994) 130-143; Pelling (1997b) 61; Desmond (2004) 26, 33-34; Rosenbloom (2006) 28.

expand the limits of the Persian Empire across the *oikoumene*. This zeal is morally bankrupt, as it was for earlier kings who analogously failed to subdue and assimilate into the empire the Massagetae, Ethiopians, Carthaginians and Scythians.

As he prepares his forces to meet the allied Greeks at Thermopylae and Artemisium, Xerxes seeks consultation with the former Spartan king Demaratus. He asks Demaratus if the Greeks will dare to engage him in battle, suggesting that unless they and all peoples to the west in Europe unite together, they will be no match for the Persians (Hdt. 7.101.2). Demaratus is quick to disagree, asserting that the Greeks derive great courage from wisdom and strong laws, enabling them to defend themselves against despotism. He points especially to the Dorian parts of the mainland and singles out his Spartan brethren. Unwilling to accept enslavement, the Spartans, the “most excellent men” in all *Hellas*, will fight against Xerxes no matter if they are vastly outnumbered, and even if the rest of the Greeks should choose to side with the Persians (Hdt. 7.102.1-3, 7.209.4).⁷⁶ These words read like an oblique criticism of the Greeks in Asia and those Greeks of the mainland who would indeed serve in the leviathan Persian army, fighting against their own people at the behest of Xerxes. There is a disparity between the worldviews of Demaratus and Xerxes, of Sparta and Persia, in regard to political liberty. Xerxes deems that the Greeks have an *ἰδίην ἐλευθερίην* (“unusual freedom” – Hdt. 7.147.1), asserting that such free men are likely to be less courageous in battle than slaves who fear their king and fight under the compulsion of the whip. Demaratus is adamant that one Spartan is as brave as any man, and together they are the greatest soldiers in the world. Although the Spartans are free of tyranny, law is their true master, whom they fear more than any of Xerxes’ troops fear him. Law commands the Spartan warrior never to flee from battle, to remain steadfast whatever the odds, and either to conquer or die (Hdt. 7.103.1 – 7.104.5).⁷⁷ This heroic course of action is,

⁷⁶ Demaratus’ explanation of the cause of Spartan military valour and ideology of freedom points to the impact of *nomoi*. His views are consistent with the earlier discussions of the slavishness of the Ionian Greeks in Asia, which Herodotus presents as heavily influenced by their neutrality to despotism and a disposition ripe for slavery: see Hdt. 1.142.1-2, 3.106.1. There is a disconnect in both instances with the contemporary Hippocratic perspective, which sees the harsh climate and environment of Europe and the temperate, fertile conditions in Asia as greatly responsible for their inhabitants’ contrasting responses to the tide of Persian despotism (Hippoc. *Aer.* 12.10-45, 13.10-24, 16.3-43, 23.1-41). Thomas (2000) 90-123 identifies the main difference between Hippocratic and Herodotean ethnography. In *Airs, Waters, Places*, *nomoi* have a considerable impact on the nature of human existence, but biology and the environment are the chief determinants. In the *Histories* it is the reverse, biology and the environment are part of the explanation, but are subordinate to *nomoi*; see also Whitmarsh (2004) 166.

⁷⁷ For analysis of the exchange between Xerxes and Demaratus, see esp. Georges (1994) 39-46; Isaac (2004) 266; Gruen (2011b) 21-22.

needless to say, what transpires at Thermopylae, as Leonidas' three hundred fight to the very last man (Hdt. 7.225.3, 7.234.2).

Herodotus balances Demaratus' effuse celebration of the Spartan sense of duty to valour by likewise championing the Athenians' supreme resolve in the face of adversity. He argues that had the Athenians fled from Xerxes' advance, then no Greeks would have stayed to withstand the Persians on the sea at the battles of Artemisium and Salamis, making the Spartan sacrifice on land at Thermopylae entirely in vain. Comparable to Aeschylus' *Persians*, Herodotus' narrative of the Persian invasion represents Greek military strength and destiny as inextricably linked to the sea. The colossal Persian military is at its most formidable on land, utilising its infantry drawn from all parts of the empire. The same military that eventually crushes Leonidas' contingent at Thermopylae is less effective on the sea, however. The Greeks, long-time seafarers, excel on the sea strategically and tactically. Throughout the *Histories*, Herodotus portrays the Greeks as a maritime people who live scattered across Mediterranean coastlines, and the Persians as a land-based people whose homeland lies in the interior of the Asian continent. This contrast of land and sea helps rationalise the outcome of the Persian Wars, the Greeks outclassing the Persians in sea battles at Artemisium and Salamis.⁷⁸ Prior to the Battle of Artemisium, the Persians expect to win an easy victory, believing their ships to be "better sailing" (ἄμεινον πλεούσας) than those of the Greeks and dwarfing them in number (Hdt. 8.10.1). Ominously, many Persian ships fall victim to a storm off the Euboean coastline, an act of divine intervention that helps to even the playing field (Hdt. 8.13.1 – 8.14.1). The ensuing battle ends in a stalemate at a great cost to both sides, with the sheer number of Persian ships proving to be an encumbrance. In the narrow waters they collide into one another, causing general, unintended mayhem (Hdt. 8.16.1-3).

The allied Greeks next engage and defeat the Persians off the island of Salamis. They do so upon the advice of the Athenian general Themistocles, who asserts that τὸ πᾶν γὰρ ἡμῖν τοῦ πολέμου φέρουσι αἱ νέες ("our ships bear all our strength for war" – Hdt. 8.62.1). He correctly predicts that the narrow waters at Salamis, like at Artemisium, would give the smaller and more manoeuvrable Greek fleet an advantage

⁷⁸ Hdt. 8.130.3 asserts that after Salamis the Persians feel like beaten men at sea, which is understandable given the catastrophe that they endured. Even still, they remain confident of easily overcoming the Greeks if and when the war returns to land; Haubold (2012) 8-18 argues that Herodotus' presentation of the Greeks as a maritime people and the Persians as landlubbers conflicts with inscriptions on Persian monuments, which document the claims of Persian monarchs to have conquered the sea.

over the larger Persian fleet (Hdt. 8.60α.1 – 8.60γ.1). By fighting at Salamis, Xerxes had ignored Artemisia of Caria's counsel not to offer battle there, because the Greeks are much stronger on the sea than his own men (οἱ γὰρ ἄνδρες τῶν σῶν ἀνδρῶν κρέσσονες τοσοῦτο εἰςὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν – Hdt. 8.68α.1). The tumult of the battle highlights the comparative discomfort felt by the Persians while fighting at sea. Nearly all of the Persians who are cast overboard during the melee drown, unable to swim.⁷⁹ In contrast, the Greeks are capable swimmers, and most who are cast overboard make it safely to the beaches of Salamis (Hdt. 8.89.1-2). During the great sea battles of the Persian invasion, the Athenians especially are at the head of Greek naval success. They go unsurpassed by all other Greeks in supply of ships, gallantry and seamanship (Hdt. 8.17.1, 8.42.2, 8.86.1, 8.136.2, 9.90.3). According to Herodotus, it is ultimately the upgrade of the Athenian naval force – intended originally for war against Aegina – that enables the salvation of *Hellas* (Hdt. 7.144.1-3). By way of their ships, the Athenians are saviours (σωτῆρας) of the Greeks, whose commitment to Greek freedom rouses to arms a significant coalition of *poleis*. Herodotus recognises that this opinion will displease many of his readers, presumably referring to those Greeks who have endured Athens' imperialist actions in the wake of the Persian invasion (Hdt. 7.139.1-6). For them, this so-called guardian of Greek freedom has itself assumed the mantle of Persian despotism and become an enemy to freedom. In the dialogue between historical narrative and present circumstance the fabric of Greek-barbarian polarity is in crisis.⁸⁰

This crisis of ethno-cultural identity is acute in the final two books of the *Histories*. In book eight, Herodotus narrates the course of the Persian invasion's two most famous naval engagements. The theme of a *Hellas* embroiled in internecine friction, regardless of the threat that Persian militarism brings to all Greeks alike, is unrelenting throughout. At the beginning of book eight, Herodotus comments on the tensions simmering beneath the surface as the Greeks assemble at Artemisium. Athens supplies the largest contingent, but other *poleis* represented include Plataea, Corinth, Megara, Chalcis, Aegina, Sicyon, Epidaurus, Eretria, Troezen and Sparta. While the Athenians numerically dominate the Greeks rallied for battle, it is a Spartan, Eurybiades, who is the chief admiral in command of the fleet. He is installed in the position at the insistence of the allies who would rather disband the fleet than be led by

⁷⁹ Cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 424-427, 433-434; for discussion of this archetypal depiction of the Persians, see E. Hall (1994) 44-80; Haubold (2012) 15.

⁸⁰ See Georges (1994) xvi, 137-143; Skinner (2012) 250.

the Athenians (Hdt. 8.1.1 – 8.2.2). This wariness of Athenian leadership likely stems from anxiety over the *polis*' potential capacity to increase its power throughout *Hellas* and the Aegean. The Athenians concede leadership of the fleet in this instance because a dispute over the issue might jeopardise the security of all Greeks. The story is different, Herodotus remarks, once the Persians have been driven back to Asia and the Athenians no longer have great need of allies. After sailing to Asia and successfully capturing Byzantium (476 BC), the Athenians remove the Spartan general Pausanias from his command of the allies and assume the leadership themselves. Not far from Herodotus' mind is the internal discord that descends upon mainland Greece as Athens converts the Delian League into its own empire. He makes an indirect reference to the Peloponnesian War, which expresses his discomfort with the friction among the Greeks: στάσις γὰρ ἔμφυλος πολέμου ὁμοφρονέοντος τοσούτῳ κάκιον ἐστὶ ὅσῳ πόλεμος εἰρήνης (“for civil strife is so much worse than war in unity, just as war is worse than peace” – Hdt. 8.3.1).⁸¹ The seeds of that most infamous and destructive Greek civil strife lay in Athens' path to empire in the decades following the Persian invasion. Herodotus projects the spectre of the Athenian empire onto the internecine tension that developed during the Greek war effort against Achaemenid Persia.

The conduct of the Ionians at the Battle of Artemisium provides Herodotus with another opportunity to illustrate the dissonance among the Greeks. He asserts that the Ionians of western Asia, though they all take the Persian side, are divided in where their true sympathies lie. Some fight under coercion and are greatly distressed at the catastrophe that might befall the allied Greeks. Others are wholeheartedly devoted to the Great King and bear animosity toward their ethnic kinsmen, challenging one another to be the first to sink an Athenian ship (Hdt. 8.10.2-3). Following the stalemate at Artemisium, Themistocles leaves a message for the Ionians which urges them and the neighbouring Carians either to defect to the Greek side or to withdraw from the war.⁸² He declares that the Ionians are acting unjustly, fighting against the land of their forefathers to bring slavery upon *Hellas*. He, moreover, reminds them of their Athenian heritage, and submits that it was the Ionians in the first place who revolted and began

⁸¹ Cf. Hdt. 1.87.4 where the Lydian king Croesus poignantly and ironically pronounces an anti-war stance, despite his own ambitions for conquest: οὐδείς γὰρ οὕτω ἀνόητος ἐστὶ ὅστις πόλεμον πρὸ εἰρήνης αἰρέεται· ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῇ οἱ παῖδες τοὺς πατέρας θάπτουσι, ἐν δὲ τῷ οἱ πατέρες τοὺς παῖδας (“For no one is so foolish so as to choose war instead of peace; for in peace sons bury fathers, but in war fathers bury sons”).

⁸² Hdt. 8.11.3 states that at Artemisium, Antidorus of Lemnos was the only Greek in Xerxes' army to desert to the other side; the rest remained loyal to their conqueror.

the current strife between the Greeks and the Persians (Hdt. 8.19.1, 8.22.1-3).⁸³ These Ionians are, of course, not the only Greeks to become, willingly or not, soldiers in the Persian army and foes of the Athenian and Spartan-led Greek alliance. As had been the case a year earlier at Thermopylae, quite a number of mainland Greek tribes also surrender their services to Xerxes during the build-up to the Battle of Salamis, including many Greeks from Arcadia, Doris, Boeotia and Thessaly (Hdt. 8.26.1, 8.27.1, 8.31.1, 8.34.1).⁸⁴ The Thessalians unsuccessfully attempt to persuade the Phocians to join the Persian invasion. Angered by the Phocians' refusal, the Thessalians guide the Persian invasion force down from northern Greece through Phocian territory toward Attica and the Peloponnese, burning and pillaging as they march (Hdt. 8.31.1 – 8.33.1). The farther Xerxes moves through the Greek mainland, Herodotus states, the more Greeks who take the Persian side (Hdt. 8.66.1-2).

The Greek flotilla amassed to meet the Persians at Salamis is again commanded by the Spartan Eurybiades. Contingents from throughout the Peloponnese, Attica and some Aegean islands assemble, but overall a multitude of Athenian ships and sailors predominate (Hdt. 8.42.2 – 8.48.1). Athens' ascendancy within the Greek alliance is a source of resentment for the rival Corinthians. They challenge Themistocles' insistence that the Greeks make their stand at Salamis rather than at the Isthmus of Corinth. Themistocles counters with the proclamation that the Athenians have a far stronger *polis* than the Corinthians, and because they also possess an unparalleled navy, there are no Greeks capable of defeating them (Hdt. 8.61.1-2). The Athenians are a mighty but divisive power whose self-consciousness of superiority alienates them from the rest of the allied Greeks, especially the citizens of Sparta and Corinth, the two most powerful Dorian *poleis* in the Peloponnese. The Athenians' confrontation with the Corinthians prior to Salamis is another preview to the establishment of the Athenian empire, and the increased internecine conflict that it ignites. In the 450s and 440s BC, Athens fought intermittently with Sparta, Corinth and their allies as it attempted to expand its sphere of influence beyond Attica and the Aegean into Boeotia, northern Greece and the Peloponnese. In 433 BC, after a brief period of relative peace, Athens and Corinth again engaged directly in armed conflict at the Battle of Sybota, following a dispute over the

⁸³ Themistocles' analysis is at odds with Herodotus' own allocation of blame to Athens for sending ships to support the Ionian Revolt, implicating all *Hellas* in what was initially a regional conflict (Hdt. 5.97.3).

⁸⁴ Cf. Hdt. 8.74.1: although several Peloponnesian *poleis* muster their forces at the Isthmus of Corinth in an effort to resist the Persian invasion, Herodotus explains that the rest of them stayed at home, caring nothing for the peril of *Hellas*.

Corinthian colony Corcyra. This conflict was one of the primary catalysts for the Peloponnesian War between the Athenians, the Spartans, and their sets of allies, all of whom were integrated into the war's Ionian versus Dorian rhetoric.⁸⁵

Despite the divisions among the allied Greeks at Salamis, they are able to capitalise on their advantage at sea, going on to win a resounding victory over the Persians. The two *poleis* to distinguish themselves in battle above all others are Aegina and Athens. Again tensions between Athens and Corinth rise to the surface, with the Athenians accusing the Corinthians of fleeing in terror from the oncoming Persian ships. The Corinthians deny this accusation and assert that they were among the foremost of the Greeks during the engagement, which, according to Herodotus, is an opinion shared by the rest of *Hellas* (Hdt. 8.94.1-4). Although Themistocles had bid all the Ionians in the Persian fleet to fight poorly at Salamis, only a few do so – the vast majority fight ardently in order to impress the Great King (Hdt. 8.85.1 – 8.86.1). Fearing that the Greeks will try to strand him in Europe by destroying his bridge of boats that yokes the Hellespont, Xerxes decides to depart immediately for Asia (Hdt. 8.97.1). Instead of the Greeks, it is for the second time a storm that wipes out the bridge of boats (Hdt. 8.117.1 – 8.119.1). Xerxes manages to escape across the water on board a ship, leaving behind Mardonius and a substantial part of his army to prosecute the war to its end (Hdt. 8.113.1). The debates about the accomplishment of different Greek peoples at Salamis elucidate the dislocation and dysfunction of the Greek ethno-cultural community during the war against Persia, which Themistocles' actions in the aftermath of the battle perpetuate. Themistocles plans to sail to the Hellespont and break the bridges, so as to prevent Xerxes from escaping, but he is thwarted by dissent from Eurybiades and other Peloponnesian commanders. The Athenians are, nevertheless, determined to pursue the Persians. Themistocles hence commits them to sail to the Hellespont and Ionia in the next spring; in the meantime, he causes havoc throughout Persian-controlled Aegean islands like Andros and Paros, demanding tribute and besieging those that decline to pay (Hdt. 8.108.1 – 8.112.3). Athens is now set firmly on course to its future empire. By undertaking to expand their power over the Aegean and onto the Asian continent, the Athenians are in danger of becoming a mirror image of the barbarian Persians who ventured out of their kingdom in Asia and invaded the Greek

⁸⁵ See Thuc. 1.24.1 – 1.65.2 for an account of the clashes involving Athens and Corinth, such as the Battle of Sybota, that preceded and triggered the Peloponnesian War.

mainland in Europe.⁸⁶ Themistocles' summation of the Persian disaster at Salamis, that the gods and heroes were too jealous to allow one man to rule over both Europe and Asia (θεοί τε καὶ ἥρωες, οἱ ἐφθόνησαν ἄνδρα ἓνα τῆς τε Ἀσίας καὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης βασιλεῦσαι), contrasts with his own expansionist objectives, albeit on a much smaller scale, following the battle (Hdt. 8.109.3). The contrast coalesces with the admonitory and didactic undercurrent running throughout Herodotus' narrative of the Persian invasion. The historian cues his audience to learn about themselves – about Greeks – with the recent history of Athenian belligerence and intra-Greek hostilities superimposed over his historical account.⁸⁷

Book eight comes to a close with an episode indicative of the fragility of panhellenism. Herodotus determines that collective Greek identity is a consciously constructed sense of unity and belonging which can be either owned or disowned in thought and action. He tells a story about the Macedonian king Alexander I (r. 498 – 454 BC) who, although himself of Greek lineage, assists the Persian invasion of the Greek mainland (Hdt. 8.137.1 – 8.139.1). Following the Battle of Salamis and Xerxes' retreat from Europe, Alexander travels to Athens on behalf of Mardonius and implores its citizens to submit willingly to the Persians (Hdt. 8.140α.1- 8.140β.4). The Spartans exhort the Athenians not to betray *Hellas* by joining themselves to the barbarians. They judge that it would be dishonourable for the Athenians to turn their backs on *Hellas*, given that it was they who incited the Persian invasion by supporting the Ionian Revolt. Even though the Athenians have in the past secured freedom for many men, such a betrayal would now make them responsible for the enslavement of all Greeks (Hdt. 8.142.1-5). In any event, the Athenians emphatically refuse to submit to the Persians, motivated to punish them for destroying the temples and statues of Athens' gods (Hdt. 8.143.1-3 – 8.144.2). Furthermore, they mean to do right by the Greeks, united as they all are in common ancestry, language, religion and way of life (Hdt. 8.144.2). This definition of Greekness, Skinner argues, may be intentionally ironic. In Herodotus' contemporary context, the Athenians themselves can hardly be viewed as champions of panhellenic unity:

⁸⁶ Liddel (2009) 13-42 explores European colonialist evaluations of Athens' empire. One of the major trends in classical scholarship of the colonial period is to supply an apologetic interpretation of the Athenian contribution to Western civilisation. This interpretation largely glosses over how negatively Athenian imperialism came to be viewed by much of *Hellas* at the time of Athens' rise to ascendancy, and instead celebrates Athens as a great civilising influence and prototype for subsequent European colonial powers.

⁸⁷ On Herodotus' didacticism, see esp. Fornara (1971) 3-4; Munson (2009) 469-470.

Herodotean audiences would have been all too aware that such rhetoric was very much at odds with the internecine conflict in which they had become embroiled. Many of them would also have been aware of Athens' move both to restrict the right of citizenship to those who could prove descent on both sides and promote myths of autochthony over kinship ties linking the city to Ionia. Such claims can either be read as darkly ironic or as an impassioned appeal to Athens, and the Hellenic community in general, to lay aside their differences and promote a common peace. They are, in short, shot through with politics as opposed to universally acknowledged truths.⁸⁸

The Athenians became architects of an empire, propagandised as a league of allies, which subjugated many Greeks in both Europe and Asia. Their past pledge never to Medise and betray their Greek kindred would have felt empty and insincere to all Greek *poleis* who had since the Persian invasion become either clients of Athens, or their enemies in the Peloponnesian War.⁸⁹ Following the example of the Persians in Asia, the Athenians had subjected their clients to the payment of tribute; the provision of troops for war; the imposition of garrisons and laws; and the seizure of land.⁹⁰

Book nine of the *Histories* covers off the two concluding acts of the Persian invasion, the battles of Plataea and Mycale. From the outset, this final book sustains Herodotus' focus on the fragility of panhellenism. Ongoing dissonance fragments the Greeks. While the majority continue to pursue freedom from despotism, others back Mardonius, as he recommences the Persian invasion and planned enslavement of mainland Greece. Just as they had for Xerxes, the Thessalians provide Mardonius and his army with safe passage through their territory (Hdt. 9.1.1). After Mardonius arrives in Boeotia, the Thebans propose that he march no farther, and instead use subterfuge to incite civil strife among the Greeks. They assert that not even the whole world could

⁸⁸ Skinner (2012) 250.

⁸⁹ For further discussion of some of the ironies in the Athenians' pledge at 8.144.2, see Konstan (2001) 36: "One of the ironies of Herodotus' ascription of a rhetoric of Panhellenic ethnic identity to the Athenians is, perhaps, just the contrast with Athenian claims of racial and cultural distinctiveness that Herodotus' audiences would readily have recognized. The oppositional style of defining Greeks as culturally distinct from barbarians may, indeed, have emerged initially more in response to Athens's new imperial projects and claims to Greek hegemony toward the beginning of the fifth century than to the need (largely after the fact) to forge a Panhellenic unity in the face of the Persian invasion"; see also Georges (1994) 124, 131; Hornblower (2008) 40-41.

⁹⁰ Raaflaub (2009) 89-124.

defeat the Greek alliance as it is currently comprised; however, if it is first weakened by internal discord, then the Persians should be able to prevail (Hdt. 9.2.1-3). By now, both the Thessalians and Thebans can be considered usual suspects of Persian partisanship. The idea that civil strife will make the Greeks vulnerable to attack is significant, a veiled allusion to the debilitating turmoil caused as Athens and Sparta clash in the Peloponnesian War. Friction between these future enemies again permeates the narrative. Mardonius marches into Attica, ignoring the Thebans' proposal. He sends envoys to the Athenians, who had crossed over to Salamis, demanding that they submit. The Athenians, in response, send envoys to the Spartans, reiterating that they will never betray *Hellas*. They then castigate the Spartans for not sending an army to support them and thereby failing to prevent the Persians from entering Attica (Hdt. 9.6.1 – 9.7β.2). Fearing the wrath of the Athenians, the ephors eventually instruct a Spartan force led by Pausanias to march north and engage the Persians in battle with the rest of the allied Greeks (Hdt. 9.10.1-3).

The two armies meet one another on the plains north of Plataea in Boeotia. In Herodotus' account of the battle, there is a dual intra-Greek antagonism. The allied Greeks are at variance with those Greeks fighting in the Persian army, and, at the same time, conflict among the allies over issues of status and leadership remains incessant. At Plataea, the Athenians, as is custom by now in the *Histories*, are at the forefront of Greek infighting. They have a heated exchange with men from the Arcadian *polis* of Tegea in the Peloponnese over which contingent should hold a wing of the army, as counterparts to the Spartans on the other wing. Both contingents extol their glorious military pasts to the amassed army. The Tegeans declare themselves to be the best of the rest after the Spartans and worthy to hold the opposite wing, as they have done in united war efforts since ancient times. The Athenians, not content to be outdone, eagerly eulogise some of their great feats of arms. Much more boastful than the Tegeans, they rank themselves as the best men in *Hellas*, exemplified by the fact that they alone defeated the Persians at Marathon. This appeal wins over the rest of the army, with the Athenians granted the honour of holding the wing (Hdt. 9.26.1 – 9.27.6). Whereas the Athenians dominate the storyline of Salamis, at Plataea the Spartans, Tegeans and Athenians earn and share Herodotus' plaudits. All three are steadfast in their resolve to resist the Persians and win freedom for *Hellas* (Hdt. 9.60.1-3). It is the Spartans, though, who are said to most excel in the battle and for whom victory seals vengeance against the Persians for the slaying of Leonidas and the three hundred at Thermopylae

(Hdt. 9.64.1-2, 9.71.1-4).⁹¹ Like in all previous engagements of the Persian Wars, at Plataea, the Persian army contains soldiers from several Greek *poleis*; arrayed on one wing of the Persian line are the Boeotians, Locrians, Malians, Thessalians, and some outcast Phocians (Hdt. 9.31.5). Herodotus testifies that some Greeks in the Persian army deliberately fight poorly, conflicted over their allegiances (Hdt. 9.40.1, 9.67.1). Moreover, on the night before the battle, Alexander of Macedon has a change of heart, approaching the Greek camp and revealing to the generals Mardonius' plan of attack (Hdt. 9.45.1-3). The Thebans of Boeotia, on the other hand, prove to be ardent loyalists of the Great King, who fight zealously for the Persian cause. After defeating the Persian army, the allied Greeks undertake to punish the Thebans' treachery, which they do by laying siege to Thebes and putting to death its chief conspirators (Hdt. 9.86.1 – 9.88.1). As recounted by Herodotus, panhellenic is a word that can be applied to the Battle of Plataea only crudely and idealistically. The Greek alliance that meets the Persians in battle is not representative of all *Hellas*, and the victory that it achieves is not for all Greeks.

The Battle of Plataea ends the Persian invasion of mainland Greece. Herodotus claims that on the very same day, the Greeks and Persians also clashed on the slopes of Mount Mycale in Ionia (Hdt. 9.90.1, 9.101.2). As Herodotus draws his narrative to an end, the embedded discourse on Greek ethno-cultural identity construction reaches a finale conceived with meaningful reference to the continents and their perceived boundaries. For the Ionians of Asia, who cause a dilemma for the concept of panhellenic unity throughout the *Histories*, Mycale is a watershed. Prior to the battle, messengers from Samos come before the allied Greek army and inform its generals that the Ionians will, when they see the allies, revolt from their Persian masters. The Samians encourage the generals to drive away the barbarians and free the Greeks from slavery (ρύσασθαι ἄνδρας Ἑλλήνας ἐκ δουλοσύνης καὶ ἀπαμῦναι τὸν βάρβαρον – Hdt. 9.90.2). After fighting obediently on the side of the barbarians in all previous encounters of the Persian Wars, the Ionians finally achieve at Mycale what they had failed to do some

⁹¹ But note Hdt. 9.46.1-3, where Pausanias offers to trade wings so that the Athenians can face the Persians in battle, seeing as they have already defeated them at Marathon and are therefore better equipped for the task. The attempts to re-organise the Greek line in this manner leads Mardonius to question the famous valour of the Spartans (Hdt. 9.47.1 – 9.48.4). Mardonius is also disbelieving of the Spartans' reputation when they and the other Greeks initially try to withdraw from the battlefield at Plataea under the cover of darkness. The logic behind this action is practical, meant to enable the allies to secure their supply lines and obtain a more favourable site for battle. In any event, the Persians check the withdrawal, forcing the Greeks to join battle. The Spartans go on to demonstrate their bravery, leading the Greeks to a decisive victory.

twenty years earlier – a triumphant revolt from the Persian Empire. The Samians are the first of the Ionians to turn against the Persians during the carnage, and the Milesians, charged with guarding the army's rear, orchestrate the slaughter of the Persians as they take flight from the field (Hdt. 9.103.2 – 9.104.1). Following the losses at Plataea and Mycale, the Persians retreat back toward the interior of the Asian continent. For the first time since the reign of Croesus, Greeks on either side of the Aegean, in both Europe and Asia, are united in freedom from the Persian yoke.⁹² At Mycale, the allied Greeks fight under the command of Leotychidas of Sparta. On the battlefield though, it is the Athenians who lead the way, identified by Herodotus as the best performed soldiers on the Greek side (Hdt. 9.105.1). As victors, the Greeks begin to drive Persian dominion back from Asia's western frontier, which creates a power vacuum in Ionia and the eastern Aegean. The Athenians immediately step into the vacuum, rebuffing the Peloponnesians' proposal to resettle the Ionians away from Asia and leave Ionia to the Persians (Hdt. 9.106.1-4). The *Histories* concludes with the siege of Sestos (479-78 BC), an Athenian incursion into Persian territory that occurs immediately post-Mycale. Located on the European side of the Hellespont opposite Abydos, Sestos is crucial to Persia's imperial strategy in the west, helping Xerxes to obtain access to Europe, the Aegean and the Black Sea. The siege of Sestos sets Athens on an imperialist and expansionist course destined to spill over the continental divide in the mould of the Persian enemy's stymied westward advance. Over the course of the next decade, Athens campaigns throughout the Aegean, the Hellespont and Ionia, diminishing Persian power and absorbing many of the Greeks in these regions into the newly formed Delian League.⁹³

At 9.116.3, Herodotus raises the idea that the Persians claimed the Asian continent as their possession, almost equidistant from the end of the *Histories* as his first reference to Persian ownership of Asia is from the beginning (Hdt. 1.4.4). The symmetry is not accidental. The concept of Persian Asia bookends a narrative in which Greeks, Persians and many other peoples frequently migrate, wage war and exchange ideas across the continental divides, diminishing the validity of boundary lines and the notion of corresponding territorial allotments.⁹⁴ As the *Histories* reaches its conclusion,

⁹² As the Persians fail to subdue mainland Greece, Herodotus reiterates that the pontoon bridge across the Hellespont lies in tatters, symbolic now of the retraction of Persian despotism: Hdt. 9.106.4, 9.114.1.

⁹³ Rosenbloom (2006) 28.

⁹⁴ On Herodotus' rejection of the notion of territorial allotment along continental lines, see Romm (1998) 83-85, 174; Munson (2001) 84-86; Romm (2010) 78-79, 84-86.

the Persians' alleged claim to Asia is on a precipice, about to be invalidated beyond contestation. In laying siege to Sestos, the Athenians have arrived at the cusp of the Europe-Asia divide. Herodotus' audience would have well known that the Athenians will soon force the Persians out of Ionia and give themselves, by way of their Delian League acquisitions, a foothold on the Asian continent. A sign of Athens' intent to expand its hegemony at the expense of the Achaemenids emerges when, with Sestos captured, the Athenian general Xanthippus has Artayctes, its wicked Persian tyrant, crucified upon the promontory where Xerxes had bridged the Hellespont (Hdt. 9.120.4). His cross, overlooking the divide between Europe and Asia, sends a message to Xerxes that it was and forever will be *hubris* for a Persian king to attempt to subjugate the Greeks in Europe. It, in addition, fires a warning to the Persians that the Athenians, in retaliatory aggression, could one day make their way back across the water to Asia. After dealing with Artayctes, the Athenians sail back home, taking with them the tattered cables of the bridge that formerly yoked together the continents. They then dedicate the cables to the temples of their gods (Hdt. 9.121.1), serving as icons of Athens' success in preventing the Persians from building an empire that incorporates the Greeks in Europe.

Herodotus manufactures a thematic closing statement for the *Histories*.⁹⁵ Its subject relates to what the future holds for Athens in its relationships with the rest of *Hellas* and also with the Persian Empire. Herodotus moves back in time to an encounter between Artayctes' grandfather, Artembares, and Cyrus the Great, former king of Persia. Showing himself to be a prototype for the imperialist belligerence of his grandson and of the future Persian Empire, Artembares counsels Cyrus to remove the ethnic Persians from the small, harsh (τροχύς) land which they inhabit in Asia's interior. He believes that as rulers of all Asia, it is reasonable for the Persian people to take possession of a better land, and thereby gain for themselves greater renown (Hdt. 9.122.1-2). In response, Cyrus argues that if the Persians take Artembares' advice, then they should be prepared to rule no longer, and instead be ruled. His reasoning refers to a conceptual polarity between "hard" and "soft" peoples and their corresponding environments (Hdt. 9.122.3):

⁹⁵ For analysis of the thematic closing statement of the *Histories*, see esp. Thomas (2004) 27.

φιλέειν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν μαλακῶν χώρων μαλακοὺς γίνεσθαι· οὐ γὰρ τι
τῆς αὐτῆς γῆς εἶναι καρπὸν τε θωμαστὸν φύειν καὶ ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς
τὰ πολέμια

For from soft lands arise soft men; for marvellous fruits and valiant men of
war are not produced by the same soil.

The Persians, at this point in time, heed Cyrus' wisdom, thinking it better to live as rulers in a harsh land than as slaves in a fertile plain (Hdt. 9.122.4). Such conservative thinking about territory and empire contrasts poignantly with the expansionist trajectory on which the Persians are due to embark. The Achaemenid kings install their own governors and administrators throughout the conquered realms, and as time progresses, they set their sights on lands far beyond the Persian homeland, epitomised by the attempts of Darius and Xerxes to subjugate mainland Greece. The Persians, as Herodotus sees it, in the end stray from the path initially set down by Cyrus, and overreach themselves in the pursuit of empire. With the army diluted in quality by men from, for example, the temperate, fertile and "soft" lands of Asia Minor, the Persians are doomed to suffer defeat at the hands of the mainland Greeks, who reside in a harsh, rocky and mountainous land.⁹⁶ In the dialogue between Artembares and Cyrus, there is an embedded message for the Athenians, who have ended the *Histories* on the offensive against the Persians at Sestos and poised to push forward with their own imperialist agenda. It is insinuated that by seeking to expand their hegemony over the Greeks and into Asia Minor, the Athenians are in danger of weakening *Hellas* as a whole. The empire that Athens subsequently acquires spans both sides of the Aegean, becoming a prime source of discord among the Greeks and a root cause of the Peloponnesian War. An imperialist destiny sets the Athenians apart from all other Greeks. As Pelling explains, they are on track to parallel the Persians as barbarian agitators and masters of Greeks:

Here the style of the Athenian expansion is bound to destabilise any
univocal picture of what is Greek and what is barbarian. The Greekest of

⁹⁶ For discussion of the conceptual polarity in the *Histories* between "hard" peoples, who live in rugged environments and "soft" peoples, who live in fertile environments, see Glacken (1967) 90; Redfield (2002) 39-49; Flower (2006) 287; Rood (2006) 303-304; Thomas (2006) 75; Munson (2009) 469-470; Gruen (2011b) 27-33; Kaplan (2014) 303-305; cf. Hippoc. *Aer.* 12.10-45, 16.3-43, 23.1-41, 24.40-67.

states—‘the Greece of Greece’, as an epigram put it (*Anth. Pal.* 7.45)—is now falling into the barbarian pattern, and the Other is coming very close to home.⁹⁷

The Europe-Asia divide is woven into the *Histories*’ ending. Immerwahr, Lateiner and Desmond have each read the Athenians’ dedication of the Hellespontine cables as symbolic of an equilibrium restored – the continents are re-separated, the Athenians return to Europe, and the Persians to Asia.⁹⁸ The preceding investigation suggests, however, that Cyrus’ warning about the vulnerabilities created by imperial expansion, implicating both the future Persian Empire and fifth-century Athens, indicates that the boundary between Europe and Asia is fated to be destabilised constantly. On this wary note, Herodotus implies that the Europe-Asia divide lacks any rigid ethnocentric significance. Throughout the *Histories*, the ambiguous ethno-cultural identity of the Ionian Greeks in Asia is heavily scrutinised, but at the close of the work, the Ionians’ place in Greek culture has become less problematic than that of their Athenian kinsmen. The Athenians’ ethno-cultural identity and the whole concept of panhellenism are about to enter into chaos, with Athens embarking on an empire building process that will see it subjugate numerous Greek *poleis* in both Europe and Asia.

Conclusion

Of all the sources studied in this thesis, Herodotus’ *Histories* provides the most substantive challenge to the theory that an interwoven polarity between Europe and Asia, Greek and barbarian, and East and West was a paradigm of ancient Greek thought. These assumed conceptual divides are destabilised by a narrative which details a whole host of transgressions across each and in either direction. The internal discord of Herodotus’ own era moulds his scepticism of ethno-cultural and geopolitical

⁹⁷ Pelling (1997b) 61; cf. Georges (1994) 206: “Are Herodotus’ Athenians barbarians? Yes and no: they are a *tertium quid* in terms of Hartog’s law of the excluded middle. They exhibit the characteristics of Asianic barbarism – luxury, atrocity, tributary empire – as well as Hellenism – Sophia and victory over barbarism. Hellenic Athens saved Hellas. But all things come round again. The moment when Athens arrives in Asia and to empire is commemorated by a crucifixion whose long shadow Herodotus casts over Athens’ prophesised but unwritten future”; for further detailed analysis of the issue, see Lateiner (1985) 91-92; Boedeker (1988) 42-48; Lateiner (1989) 132-134; Harrison (2000a) 121; (2000b) 110; Munson (2001) 58; Champion (2004) 38-39; Desmond (2004) 26, 33-34; Rood (2006) 298-299; Harrison (2007) 52; (2011) 58-59.

⁹⁸ Immerwahr (1966) 43; Lateiner (1985) 89; Desmond (2004) 26, 33-34.

abstractions. In his view, the continents are artificial constructs that unnecessarily partition an *oikoumene* which is, by and large, contiguous. Herodotus writes about world history from a pluralistic perspective. He recounts various versions of events, presenting all the messy detail about the past and the peoples that populate it. As such, the standard belief that Herodotus systematically interprets culture and identity in relation to a neat continental framework is disingenuous. The ethnographical discussions in the *Histories* portray the *oikoumene* as an untidy collage of peoples, with all three continents home to both Greek and barbarian populations. The notion of Greek-barbarian polarity consistently gives way to Herodotus' universal, open-minded gaze, as he observes the common threads that link together different peoples across the *oikoumene*. A profound illustration of these common threads occurs when Herodotus alludes to Athens' imperialist destiny. Following the barbarian example of Achaemenid Persia, the *polis* will soon make incursions across continental divides and expand its hegemony over much of the Greek world. This objectionable commonality between Athens and Persia is the final chapter in Herodotus' obfuscation of the Greek-barbarian dichotomy.

Conclusion

The premise of this thesis, that geographical concepts had an important and complex involvement in the construction of ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities, has been corroborated by analysis of the primary sources. As fundamental building blocks of world geography, the continents and the Mediterranean Sea developed figurative meanings which impacted the concept of Greekness. The dialogue about what it meant to be Greek consisted of a myriad of competing identity discourses, ranging from the local/*polis* to the panhellenic. As such, the ancient Greeks held diverse opinions about their sense of place in the *oikoumene* and its association with the continents and the Mediterranean Sea. Scholarship on the geographical content of Greekness does not comprise a specified area of academic inquiry. The issue has received some cursory treatment within the field of research into ancient Greek ethnicity and identity, but otherwise relevant observations are found scattered throughout investigations into Greek geography, ethnography and history. Though there is a growing body of work that seeks to disentangle ancient Greek ethno-cultural identity construction from modern thought patterns, the secondary literature on the whole is still profoundly guided by the modern philosophical and anthropological concept of alterity. Many studies have interpreted the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity as consistent with a rigid Self versus Other dichotomy, the Greeks defining themselves as the cultural opposites of inferior non-Greek barbarians. When geography is added into the mix, two distinct but coexistent ethnocentric worldviews have regularly been ascribed to the ancient Greeks. The first is a culturally hierarchical centre versus periphery model, which places the Greek Self in the centre of the *oikoumene* and the barbarian Other around the periphery.¹ The second pertains to the Europe-Asia continental divide, which is perceived to function as an allegory for the antithesis of Greek and barbarian. An outgrowth of this interpretation sees the ancient Greeks associated with modern colonialist Orientalism. As ancestors of the civilised West, the Greeks used art and literature to stigmatise as inferior the barbarian peoples of Asia, ancestors of the exotic

¹ See Hartog (1988) 349; Gould (1989) 94-98; Romm (1992) 46-47, 54-55; Bichler (2001) 45-48; Karttunen (2002) 457; Cole (2004) 75-76; Varisco (2007) 65; Gunter (2009) 57-58; Cole (2010) 199, 207; McInerney (2011) 96-101; Brotton (2012) 8-9, 24, 35; Dueck (2012) 188; Irby (2012) 83; Skinner (2012) 72.

and hostile East.² This thesis has contributed to knowledge by way of its unique focus on the relationship between geography and ethno-cultural identity, comprehensively examining the Greeks' integration of the continents and the Mediterranean Sea into the process of their ethno-cultural identity construction. The value of the examination derives in large part from a concerted effort to understand ancient Greek thinking in its original cultural context. Primary source analysis has formed the basis of each chapter, steering the conversation beyond the compass of conventional interpretative frameworks, specifically centre versus periphery and East versus West. The evidence indicates that these binaries retroactively project modern prejudices and modes of perception onto the ancient Greeks, which oversimplify and distort how they conceptualised the geographic and ethnographic make-up of the *oikoumene*.

The most salient points and conclusions of the thesis are laid out below. Chapter one evaluated the thriving field of research into ancient Greek ethno-cultural identities. The chapter's import derives from its assessment that the literature is over-reliant on modern views of and approaches to identity. The impact of the theory of structural dualism has been felt, decisively propelling the discussion about panhellenism toward the idea that the Greeks conceived of their collective identity in terms of rigid polar opposites. The Greeks, keepers of culture and civilisation, see themselves as counterbalanced by non-Greeks, caricatured as barbarian inferiors. The most significant evolution of the discussion was triggered by Said's *Orientalism*. Said has left an indelible mark on the study of ancient Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. He detected an Orientalist agenda in ancient Greek ethnography, which defines the Persians and other peoples of Asia as Orientals – barbarians of the East, typecast as homogeneously effeminate, slavish and decadent. Many classicists have since adopted and adapted Said's interpretation. My position is that this interpretation imprints onto the ancient Greeks perceptions of otherness specific to European colonialist ideology. Pursuing a methodology that has gained some traction in recent times, this thesis has been built around primary source analysis, instead of approaches driven by theoretical concerns. The focus on the ancient sources has brought to light the widespread fluidity in the

² See Hay (1957) 2-3; W. H. Parker (1960) 278; Said (1978) 54-57; E. Hall (1989) 75-76, 99; de Romilly (1992) 2; Coleman (1997) 188; Mikkeli (1998) 7; Kaplan (1999) 11-13, 20-22, 34; Hartog (2001) 81-82; Guerrina (2002) 2-3; Pagden (2002) 35-36; Alonso-Núñez (2003) 147; Brosius (2006) 76; Munn (2006) 181; n. 7, 225, 233; Mitchell (2007) 58-62; Pagden (2008) x-xvii; Price and Thonemann (2010) 116-117; Meier (2012) 26-28, 37; Kim (2013) 30.

ancient Greek understanding of what defined Greek and barbarian as categories of identification, a fluidity largely irreconcilable with the fabric of Orientalism.

Chapter two shifted from the issue of Orientalism to that of geographical ethnocentrism, analysing how the ancient Greeks imagined the *oikoumene* to be an aggregate geographical space comprised of several important component parts. It concentrated especially on the perceived position, orientation and symbolic meaning of the Mediterranean Sea, as it related to the concept of *Hellas* and Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. In the scholarship, the Mediterranean Sea has been persistently linked with the idea of a Hellenocentric centre versus periphery paradigm. Accordingly, the Greeks identified *Hellas* as a highly sophisticated civilisation that is spread all around the shores of the Mediterranean, occupying the most desirable central space of the *oikoumene*. Surrounding the Greeks are degenerate barbarian peoples, who predominantly occupy the less desirable continental interiors and outlying regions. Chapter two's study of the theory of ancient Greek geographical ethnocentrism again applied a source-based approach. It ascertained that a culturally hierarchical centre versus periphery binary is merely one among the various and often less systematised ways in which the Greeks conceptualised links between geographical concepts and ethno-cultural identities. With the Greeks living in *poleis* scattered far and wide around the Mediterranean, *Hellas* existed as an abstract concept, rather than as a tangible, contiguous shared territory with demarcated boundaries. Consequently, the Greeks came to view the Mediterranean as the geographical concept most emblematic of panhellenism. In the source tradition, the sea and its shores at the fringes of the continents represent the primary sphere of Greek culture, experience and interconnections. Although the sources often locate the Greeks and the Mediterranean in the centre of the *oikoumene*, the reasons for this are not necessarily always ethnocentric. Logical perceptions of the inhabited/known world's overall geographic structure; climatological theory; and the linear cataloguing of geographic and ethnographic data all played their part. *Hellas* was the central axis in relation to which Greek itinerants catalogued sequentially the places and peoples that they encountered as they travelled away from a starting point and back again. The Greeks, furthermore, understood themselves to inhabit a median position in the temperate zone of the *oikoumene*, at the intersections of the continents Europe, Asia and Libya.

With the issue of geographical ethnocentrism dealt with, the third chapter examined what the continents meant to their architects Anaximander and Hecataeus. It

weighed into the debate about the degree to which they envisaged the continents to function as symbols relevant to Greek ethno-cultural identity construction. The majority view is that the Europe-Asia continental divide came to stand for the cultural antithesis of Greek and barbarian, East and West. The Persian Wars, in particular, are believed to have crystallised this symbolism. One school of thought even traces the paradigm of Europe and Asia, Greek and barbarian back to the maps and treatises of Anaximander and Hecataeus.³ As in the previous chapters, my input into the discussion was critical of the imbalance in the scholarly narrative that favours theory over source analysis. I revisited and challenged the hypothesis that Anaximander and Hecataeus regarded the continents as geographical referents for Greek-barbarian antithesis. This hypothesis is driven by the Orientalist discourse of a cultural clash between East and West that began in ancient Greece. In the scarce remains of the work of Anaximander and Hecataeus, an interwoven Europe-Asia, Greek-barbarian polarity is indiscernible. For these Milesian Greeks, the continents' cultural geography related to geopolitics. Circumstantial evidence suggests that Anaximander's Asia was conceptually synonymous with the Lydian Empire that reigned over Ionia until 547 BC; while Hecataeus' Asia was synonymous with the Persian Empire that supplanted Lydian rule. These constructs, rather than designating the locale of barbarism, served to explain the Ionians' precarious and liminal position in the *oikoumene*. They were Greeks living in Asia across the water from the mainland, right on the boundary with Europe, and at the western edge of the Asiatic empires to which they were subservient.

Chapter four carried out a detailed case study of Aeschylus' *Persians*, using the play to explore the evolution in the continents' cultural geography that eventuated in the context of the Persian invasion of mainland Greece. During the conflict, Athens was the primary target and victim of Persian aggression; however, the Athenian-led allied Greek victory catapulted the *polis* into ascendancy in the Aegean. The mood in post-invasion Athens exuded a combination of fear, vitriol and resolve, with xenophobic rhetoric, directed most vehemently at the Persians and their subject peoples, reaching unprecedented levels. It was against this backdrop that the Europe-Asia divide became properly invested with emotive symbolic meanings relevant to Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. In works of Athenian drama especially, associations between the Europe-Asia divide and Greek-barbarian polarity are plain to see. The authenticity of

³ Coleman (1997) 188; Kaplan (1999) 11-13, 20-22, 34; Munn (2006) 181: n. 7, 225, 233; Mitchell (2007) 58-62.

the Europe-Asia, Greek-barbarian paradigm in the fifth-century Athenian psyche has been regularly asserted in the secondary literature. Little attention has been paid to the different nuances and variations in the paradigm's articulation across the source tradition. It is not pervasive or uniform, which is to be expected given that the escalation of Athenian antipathy toward barbarians after the Persian invasion was symbiotically accompanied by increased insecurity and cynicism about the notion of Greek-barbarian polarity. Responding to traditional readings which see the *Persians* as galvanised by anti-barbarian prejudice, I have argued that the tragedy is, in fact, symptomatic of the complexities and contradictions in Athenian attitudes to the differentiation of Greeks from barbarians.⁴ For Aeschylus, Greek ethno-cultural self-definition is played out in fundamental connection with the continental system. He creates a geographical opposition between the Asian continent, equated with the Achaemenid Persian Empire, and mainland Greece, the general locale of the Athenian *polis*. The opposition embraces a martial character intrinsic to fifth-century Athenian ethno-cultural identity construction. Persian Asia is militarised and mobilised for conquest of the Greek mainland. The colossal size of the continent is purposely emphasised in conjunction with the numerical advantage and impressive quality of its arms and men. Mainland Greece is tiny by comparison, as is the naval force, spearheaded by the Athenians, that successfully resists the Persians at Salamis. Aeschylus refrains from denouncing Persian Asia as a land of pathetic barbarian combatants. He instead furnishes the continent with an aura of formidability, so as to make the tragedy of its defeat all the more compelling. This aura also magnifies the outstanding accomplishment of the Athenian victory – a triumph of “David versus Goliath” proportions.

The fifth and final chapter of the thesis had the task of surveying Herodotus' multi-layered outlook on the relationship between geography and Greek ethno-cultural self-definition. My reading of the *Histories* conflicts with the predictable association of Herodotus with Orientalism – depicting Persian Asia as a homogeneous and distinctive barbarian world.⁵ One of the most persistent messages of Herodotus' work is that intrusions across continental boundary lines punctuate the history of the *oikoumene*. Migrations, thefts, wars, trade, and knowledge exchanges interconnect the history and

⁴ For the view that ethnocentric prejudice drives Aeschylus' characterisation of barbarians in the play, see esp. Georges (1994) 76-114; Harrison (2000b) 51-52, 61-65.

⁵ See Pohlenz (1937) 5, 20, 30; Drews (1973) 71-76; Armayor (1978) 1-9; Said (1978) 21, 54-58, 68; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987a) xi-xiv; (1987b) 33-45; Hartog (1988) 10-11, 193-194, 210-215; E. Hall

culture of Greeks and barbarians, and problematise the Europe-Asia divide, in particular, to the extent that it is rendered devoid of ethnocentric connotation. The interaction between geography and ethno-cultural identities in the *Histories* is haphazard by design. A fluid patchwork of spaces, places and peoples comprise an *oikoumene* in which Greeks and barbarians are constantly traversing geographical, cultural, and political boundaries. Whether one is Greek or barbarian is more or less insignificant to Herodotus. Within humanity, similarity and commonality among peoples are just as diffuse and significant as diversity and difference. Herodotus was ahead of his time to the point that even today much that is written about the past is done so in a dogmatic, “un-Herodotean” fashion, arbitrarily compartmentalising the history of the West off from the rest of the world. Herodotus’ holistic approach to world history, geography and ethnography was not, however, an aberration in ancient Greek thought. He assembled and explored many different existing viewpoints about the world’s interconnectedness, which are far less well-known and understood than other existing viewpoints focussed on dividing and polarising the places and peoples of the *oikoumene*.

(1989) 73, 99, 102; Coleman (1997) 188; Hartog (2001) 79-82; Isaac (2004) 302; Brosius (2006) 76; Pagden (2008) x-xvii; Kim (2009) 10; Meier (2012) 26-28, 37.

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